OLD CHELSEA

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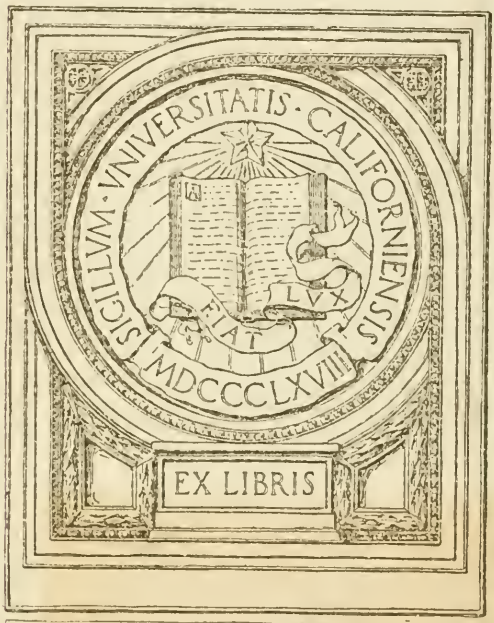

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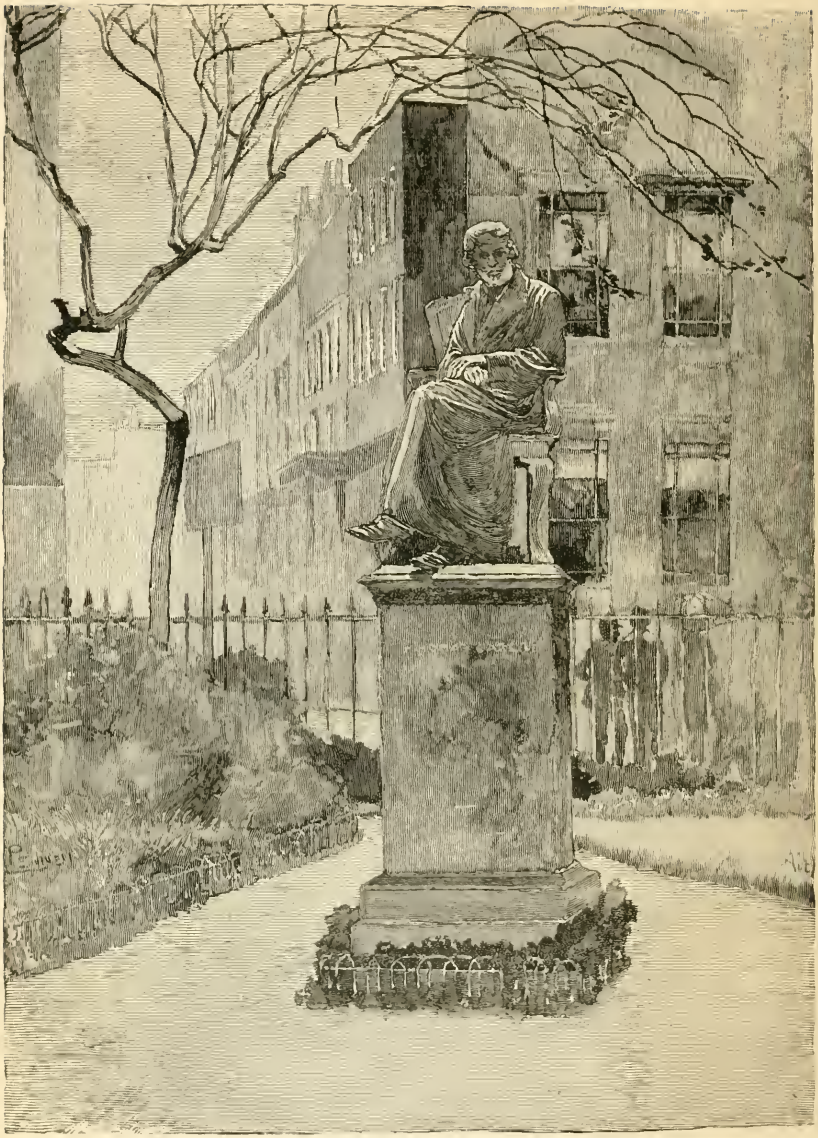

STATUE OF THOMAS CARLYLE, BY BOEHM.

OLD CHELSEA

A SUMMER-DAY'S STROLL

BY

BENJAMIN ELLIS MARTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY JOSEPH PENNELL

London
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NOTE.

The stroll described in these pages may be imagined to be taken during the summer of 1888: all the dates, descriptions, and references herein having been brought down to the present moment.

The specimen of Old Chelsea ware on the cover is an accurate copy—reduced in size, naturally—of one of the plates of the set belonging once to Dr. Johnson, now in Holland House. For the privilege of this unique reproduction I am indebted to the courtesy of Lady Holland.

B. E. M.

London, *August*, 1888

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"Out of monuments, names, wordes, proverbs, traditions, private recordes and evidences, fragments of stories, passages of bookes, and the like, we doe save and re-cover somewhat from the deluge of Time."—*Bacon*, "*Advancement of Learning*," *Book II.*

"I have always loved to wander over the scenes inhabited by men I have known, admired, loved, or revered, as well amongst the living as the dead. The spots inhabited and preferred by a great man during his passage on the earth have always appeared to me the surest and most speaking relic of himself: a kind of material manifestation of his genius—a mute revelation of a portion of his soul—a living and sensible commentary on his life, actions, and thoughts."—*Lamartine*, "*Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.*"

"The man that is tired of London is tired of existence."—*Samuel Johnson.*

Old Chelsea.

I HAD strolled, on a summer day, from Apsley House towards the then residence of Charles Reade at Knightsbridge, when I came upon one of those surprises of which London is still so full to me, even after more than a dozen years of fond familiarity with its streets and with all that they mean to the true lover of the Town. For, as I watched the ceaseless traffic of the turbulent turnings from the great thoroughfare down towards Chelsea, there came to my mind a phrase in the pages of its local historian : who, writing but a little earlier than the year 1830, points with pride to a project just then formed for the laying out of the latest of these very streets—at that day it was a new rural road cut through fields and swamps—and by it, he says, " Chelsea will obtain direct connection with Lon-

don; and henceforth must be considered an integral part of the Great Metropolis of the British Empire"! It is hard to realise that only fifty years ago Chelsea was a rustic and retired village, far from London: even as was Islington, fifty years ago, when Charles Lamb, pensioned and set free from his desk in the India House, retired to that secluded spot with his sister to live "in a cottage, with a spacious garden," as he wrote; with "the New River, rather elderly by this time, running in front (if a moderate walking pace can be so termed)": even as was Kensington—"the old court suburb pleasantly situated on the great Western road"—just fifty years ago, when wits and statesmen drove between fields and market gardens to the rival courts of Gore House and of Holland House; and N. P. Willis delighted the feminine readers of the *New York Mirror* with his gossip about his visits to Lady Blessington and about the celebrities who bowed before her. To-day all these villages, along with many even more remote, are one with London. Yet, more than any of them, has Chelsea kept its old village character —albeit preserving but few of its old village features.

THE EMBANKMENT MANSIONS FROM BATTERSEA.

Of the many magnificent mansions which gave it the name of "The Village of Palaces" five alone still stand —Blacklands, Gough, Lindsey, Stanley and Walpole Houses—and these are greatly altered. I shall show you all of them in our stroll to-day. In between them, and away beyond them, streets have been cut, new quarters built: made up in part of "genteel" villas and rows of respectable residences; but in great part, also, of cheap dwellings, of small and shabby shops. These extremes render much of modern Chelsea utterly uninteresting, except mayhap to the collector of rents or to the inspector of nuisances. Yet much of that which is truly ancient and honourable has been fondly kept untouched, and not ignobly cleaned, as in next-door Kensington. Alongside this artistic squalor we have the curious contrast of artistic splendour in a blazing, brand-new quarter, of which the sacred centre is Tite Street. Here, amid much that is good and genuine in our modern manner, there is an aggressive affectation of antiquity shown by the little houses and studios obtruding on the street, by the grandiose piles of mansions towering on the embankment: all in

raging red brick, and in the so-called Queen Anne style. The original article, deadly dull and decorous as it may be, has yet a decent dignity of its own as a real relic, not found in this painful pretence of ancient quaintness. This is a quarter, however, much in vogue ; mighty swells dwell here, and here pose some famous *farceurs* in art and literature ; here, too, work many earnest men and women in all pursuits of life. These latter plentifully people every part of Chelsea, for the sake of the seclusion and the stillness they seek and here find : just as there settled here for the same reasons, two centuries ago and earlier, men of learning and of wealth, scholars and nobles, who kept themselves exclusive by virtue of their birth or their brains. And so this privileged suburb,

"Where fruitful Thames salutes the learned shore,"

came to be in time a place of polite resort : while yet, in the words of Macaulay, it was but "a quiet country village of about one thousand inhabitants, the baptisms therein averaging a little more than forty in the year." On the slope which rises from the river—as we see it

in our print of those days—stand, in trim gardens, the grand mansions which first made the little village famous. Back from these isolated houses and between them stretch fair fields, and fertile meadows, and wooded slopes ; and along the river bank runs a row of fishermen's thatched cottages. Here and there on the shore, are nestled noted taverns and pleasure-gardens, much frequented by town visitors, reputable or not, coming up the river on excursions—as does Pepys, "to make merry at the Swan." Gay sings of the place and the period :

> "Then Chelsey's meads o'erhear perfidious vows,
> And the press'd grass defrauds the grazing cows."

The low river shore, planted with lime and plane trees, is protected by a slight embankment : first built by the Romans on the banks above their walled town of London : improved later by the Norman conquerors ; and kept in repair afterward either by landlord or by tenant, as might be decided in the incessant disputes between them, still shown on the parish records of that day. This little embankment

is broken here and there by carved gateways, giving entrance to the grand houses; and by water staircases—called, in our print, Ranelagh, Bishop's, Old Magpye, Beaufort Stairs—from which a few country lanes—such as Pound and Church Lanes and Cheyne Row—lead from the river front to the King's Road. This road had been first a foot-path following the windings of the river a little inland—worn perhaps by the feet of the wandering tribes of Trinobantes—and had gradually enlarged itself as the country around became cultivated. It led from the village of Whitehall through the woods and fields, across the tidal swamps and the marsh lands west of Westminster—partly filled in by the great Cubitt with the earth dug out in the excavations of St. Katherine's docks, early in this century: where now stretches graceful St. James's Park, where now Belgravia is built so bravely—and so the road ran to the slopes of Chelsea, to the first good land close alongside the river which rose fairly above it.

Such was the secret of the speedy settlement of this secluded suburb. It was high and healthy, and

T. Mowers Delin.

Published according to Act of Parliament 1st August 1744

I. Mynde sculp.

A View of CHELSEA.

Vue du Village de CHELSEA.

Printed for Tho. Bowles on St. Pauls Church Yard & Jo. Bowles at the Black Horse in Cornhill

had easy access to town by the safe, swift, silent highway of the river ; when few cared to go by the land road, bad enough at its best, unsafe even in daylight by reason of the foot-pads ; but at last made wide and smooth for his coach by Charles II., recently restored. He used it as the royal route to Hampton Palace, and called it the King's Private Road. Even that exclusive name did not serve to make it safe ; and long after Chelsea Hospital was built, a guard of its pensioners nightly patrolled, as an escort for honest travellers, from where Buckingham Palace now stands, across Bloody Bridge,—at the edge of present Pimlico,—and so away through the Five Fields, "where robbers lie in wait," as the *Tatler* puts it. For Mr. Dick Steele often went by this road to Chelsea, where he had a little house somewhere near the river bank : whereto he was fond of taking "a friend to supper," leaving word at home that he should not be able to return until the next morning, the roads being so unsafe by night ! Sometimes his friend Addison was with him ; sometimes the latter walked this way alone to his own home,

at the farther end of Chelsea; and once on a moonlight night, he strolled out here with Colonel Esmond, as you may remember. A few years later, this same walk was frequently taken by Mr. Jonathan Swift, from Mrs. Vanhomrigh's house in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall—where he used to leave his "best gown and periwig," as he tells Stella—"and so to Chelsea, a little beyond the Church." And still later, in December, 1754, Smollett was robbed of his watch and purse—there was but little in the latter, for he was then in poor case—as he went by coach from London to his residence out in Chelsea.

"King's Road," as we see it to-day, in dingy letters on the old brick or plaster-fronted houses, makes us almost look for the Merry Monarch—as history has mis-named one of her saddest figures—driving past, on his way to Hampton Court, in company with a bevy of those beauties who still lure our senses from out their canvasses on the walls of the old palace. We see, at intervals along the road, behind its rusty

STEAMBOAT PIER AT OLD BATTERSEA BRIDGE, AND THE RIVER FRONT, TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.[1]

iron railings and flagged front-yard and old-time porch, a long low brick house,

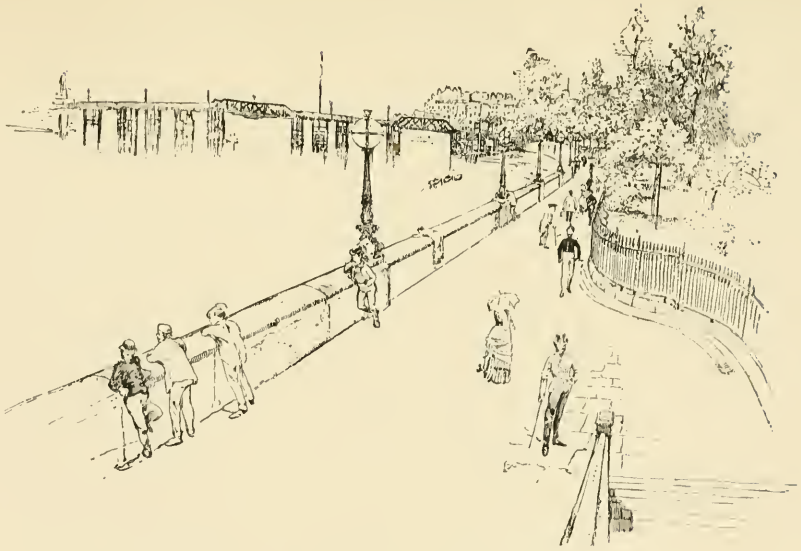
> . . . "whose ancient casements stare
> Like sad, dim eyes, at the retreating years,"

as if weary of waiting for their owner to come home from the Dutch wars. Through narrow archways we catch glimpses of trees and of gardens. Turning down a rural lane we stroll into "The Vale," and find a clump of cottages, covered with vines, grown about with greenery; flowers blow, cocks crow, an air of country unconcern covers the enclosure. The French gardeners who came here in crowds in 1685, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and set Chelsea

[1] This illustration and those on pages 114 and 123, have been made from photographs by J. Hedderly, and are admirable specimens of the many taken by him during a long and laborious life, and which have genuine artistic merit as well as historic value in their preservation of the features of Old Chelsea. Hedderly's was the curious case of a man living for fifty years in daily contact with the ancient and the odd, and yet always keen to appreciate it and accurate in seizing it. On his death, in 1885, his plates went to his daughter, and the photographs can be bought from George White, Printer, 396, King's Road, just at the end of Park Walk: by whose permission these photographs have been re-drawn.

all a-bloom with their nurseries, have left to their heirs but a diminished domain ; yet although Butterfly Alley, sought by sauntering swells, has gone, King's Road is still countrified by its florists : their famous wistarias grow on the Hospital walls and climb the houses of Cheyne Walk : you still find their fig-trees in private gardens, their vines on old-fashioned trellises : they make Chelsea streets all green and golden with their massed creepers through summer and through autumn. In unexpected corners you will stumble on a collection of cosy cottages, like Camera Square ; there are a few rural nooks still left ; here and there a woodland walk ; and in dairies hid behind stone streets the cow is milked for you while you wait to drink the warm milk

And on the river bank, although the old Roman and the old Norman wall and walk are replaced by the broad new Embankment and its smug gardens ; although the insolent affectations of the Queen Anne mania stare stonily down on Cheyne Walk ; all these have not been able to vulgarise this most delightful of promenades. Starting from Chelsea Barracks we



THE EMBANKMENT AND OLD BATTERSEA BRIDGE.

can still walk under the old plane trees:—on our right the ancient Dutch-fronted houses, so prim, so secluded, so reserved; on our left the placid flow of the storied Thames, broadened here into Chelsea Reach:—to dingy, dear old Battersea Bridge, and so on to Sand's End. At each end of our walk are the two small rivulets which bounded the old parish east and west; one is now arched over and flows unseen beneath the tread of busy feet; the other serves as a railway cutting and carries rattling trains: so the old-time memories of the place now either flow underground, or are modernised and become part of its daily life.

In the extreme north-eastern corner as we enter Chelsea we find Hans Place, a secluded green oval, built about with old-time two-storied brick houses. In No. 25 was born in 1802 the poetess, Letitia E. Landon, known as "L. E. L."; and at No. 22 she went to school.[1] At the farthest south-western point of the

[1] One of her school-mates here, by the way, was that Miss Roberts who wrote so well about India; another was Lady Caroline Lamb, heroine of the scissors-stabbing scene for Byron's

parish, just over on the border of Fulham, stands the old house once tenanted by Nell Gwynne. At the northern end of Church Street, opposite the Jewish burial ground, is a public-house, "The Queen's Elm," perpetuating the memory of the tree, there standing until very lately, under which Elizabeth sought shelter from a shower, when strolling in the fields with Burleigh on one of her frequent visits to Chelsea. On the southern, the river, border of the parish, lived George Eliot ; and here, at No. 4, Cheyne Walk, she died. Between these spots, marked by the memories of these four women, so far apart in time, rank, and character, how much of history and romance do we traverse !

sake. And among other scholars here at other times we find names famous in later life, as that of Lady Bulwer, of Mrs. S. C. Hall, of Miss Mary Russell Mitford. The latter lady lived for several years after her school days at No. 33, Hans Place. In No. 41 lodged Percy Bysshe Shelley, at one time. These two last-named houses have been raised two stories, and renewed ; while Nos. 22 and 25 have been recently torn down and rebuilt. Thus every house in Hans Place having historic association has been ruined for us, and others of no interest from our point of view in this stroll are left intact in their age—a queer fatality which I find to have pursued too many buildings of old London !

In taking you for a stroll to-day through Old Chelsea we will not stop to puzzle over the etymology of the name; whether it came from the Saxon, *Chelchythe*, or from *Chesel*, meaning gravel, and *ea*, meaning a bank: nor trace it back to its earliest appearance in Saxon chronicles, in 745, as the Hundred of Ossulston, Middlesex. You may see, if you choose, in the British Museum, the Charter of Edward the Confessor giving the "Manor of Chelsey to the Abbot and brothers of the Ministers of the West," by whom it was rented for four pounds yearly. But it will not add to the interest of our stroll to learn that when it was a residence of Offa, King of the Mercians, there was a "Geflit-fullic" held here; nor that they had "a contentious synod." Nor shall we altogether partake of the joy of one Maitland, sounding for many a day up and down the river, and at last finding, on the eighteenth of September, 1732, the very ford between Chelsea and Battersea, traversed by Cæsar's army in pursuit of the flying Britons. For several centuries after the Conquest, the

names Chelcheth or Chelchith were used indifferently; in the sixteenth century it began to be written Chelsey; and it is only since about 1795 that the modern spelling has prevailed.

Among the archives of Chelsea may be seen the will, dated in 1369, of the Earl of Warwick; and we know that long before that year he had come here with the prestige of his prowess at Poictiers, his courage at Cressy, and had built himself a house—the first great nobleman's house erected here. But we do not know where it stood, nor anything more of it, than that it was afterwards leased by Richard III. to the widowed Duchess of Norfolk for the yearly rental of one red rose.

Sir Thomas More's is the first house, as well as the fullest of human interest, of which we have any authentic record in Chelsea; and it was he who laid the foundations of the prosperity of the place. He built it for himself in 1520: glad to go from narrow Bucklersbury in the City to sweet sights and sounds and air for his young children. For more than two centuries his house stood here, tenanted by many

RIVER THAMES
CHELSEA HOSPITAL
BURTONS COURT
QUEENS ROAD WEST
FLOOD ST.
MANOR ST.
OAKLEY ST.
CHURCH ST.
BEAUFORT ST.
CHELSEA EMBANKMENT
BATTERSEA BRIDGE
CHELSEA BRIDGE
ROYAL HOSPITAL ROAD
SITE OF CREMORNE GARDENS
ASHBURNHAM HOUSE
STANLEY HOUSE
CHELSEA STATION
CREMORNE PIER

families, famous and infamous, until 1740, when it was pulled down. It is a labour of love, and no difficult one, to reconstruct it as Bowack saw it : " This house is between 200 and 300 feet in length, has a stately ancient front towards the Thames, also two spacious courtyards, and behind it are *very fine gardens.* It is so pleasantly situated that the late Queen Mary had a great desire to purchase it before King William built Kensington Palace, but was prevented by some secret obstacles." An old view signed "L. Knyff del : 1699," shows us a projecting porch in the centre, a dozen or more generous windows on each floor, four of them oriel ; and above, many gables, turrets, and a small tower. The back view crowds together, in picturesque confusion, a mass of casements, close packed gables, and jutting pent-houses. Such was " this pore howse in Chelchith " from which More dated one of his letters ; and Erasmus wrote of it that it was " neither mean nor invidiously grand, and so subject to envy, yet commodious enough." It stood on the slope a little back from the river, half-way up to the King's Road, about where Beaufort Street now runs. A spacious

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garden lay in front, too, wherein the great Chancellor was wont to walk, as well as on the gate-house, which, in the words of Aubrey, "was flatt on the top, leaded, from whence is a most pleasant prospect of the Thames and the fields beyond." Sometimes he walked with his guest Holbein; sometimes with his friend Ellis Heywood, poet and playwright, who wrote warmly about "this enchanting spot"; sometimes with his King, Henry VIII., who, still posing as a good Catholic and Defender of the Faith, used to come up the river, drop into dinner, and saunter afterward in the garden, his arm about More's neck. The son-in-law, Roper, records this with delight, "never having seen the King so familiar with any one else, except Wolsey." More knew just what all this was worth, and that his head would count, with the king, for nothing against "say a French city or a citadel." Wolsey's fate—the fate of so many others—howbeit warned none of the rest; else could they not have forgotten that to every neck on which had hung that royal ruffian's arm the axe soon came; and that to be his friend was only a little less dangerous than to be his wife.

In this garden were the stocks for heretics, and the "Jesus tree," or tree of troth, whereat they were flogged; for More was fond of suppressing heresy, and failing that, he used to suppress the heretics, by flinging them into prison. The resolute old Catholic denied that he had ever laid hands on a dissident, but it is certain that some one did so by his orders. Near his house he had put up the "newe buildinge, for the entertainment of distressed old men and women;" and therein was a small chapel, where he spent much time, praying, and scourging himself with a knotted cord; wearing next his skin the hair shirt which is still preserved in the convent of Spilsberg. He was fond of assisting in the service at the old church, carrying the cross in the procession, and doing divers duties "like a parish clerk." One day the Duke of Norfolk, coming out to dine with him, "fortuned to finde him in the quier with a surplisse on his backe, singinge:" at the sight of which servile service, the good worldly duke was moved to wrathful remonstrance.

All this rigidity in religion was but the natural stand of a strong character against the drift of the times and

the current that was carrying crowds down with the king; and it narrowed none in the least this man's broad spirit, nor touched for the worse his quaint, gentle humour, his fine wit, his sweet and wholesome nature. It was he who had said, in better balanced days :— "A man may live for the next world, yet be merry withal :" his was the dainty description of Jane Shore in her youth :—"Proper she was and fair ; nothing in hir body that you would have changed, but if you would have wished hir somewhat higher ;" and his that pitiful picture of her old age and misery. It was of him that Erasmus wrote these beautiful words : "There was not any man living who was so affectionate to his children as he ; and he loveth his old wife as well as if she were a young maid." Nor was she only "old," but, in the words of More's grandson, "of good yeares, of no good favour nor complexion, nor very rich ; her disposition very near and worldly." Moreover, she was his second wife ; and to her—selfish, grasping, hard, nagging — this man grandly gave unswerving devotion to the very last. His was, indeed, an ideal household into which I like to look ; all

dwelling together in affectionate amity ; father, mother, the son and his wife, the three daughters—"the Moricæ" —and their husbands, with all the grandchildren ; and the orphan girl, Margery Giggs, adopted as a daughter by More, " and as dear to him as if she were his own." There is work for all, and "no wrangling, no idle word was heard ; no one was idle," Erasmus tells us. All the female folk study too—a rare thing then, for More was centuries ahead of his time in his larger views of woman's education, as he—the greatest minister of Humanism—was in political and in mightier matters. Pithily he put it : " It mattereth not, in harvest time, whether the corn were sown by a man or a woman." At his table—his dining-hour was doubtless late, for he urges this boon among the other wise innovations of his " Utopia "—met the " best society " of England, and famous foreign guests. Perhaps it was here that Erasmus sat, greatest of scholars and divines, himself easily first of all that notable band; admiring, as he owns, Grocyn's vast range of knowledge, and Linacre's subtle, deep, fine judgment ; seeming to hear Plato speak, as he listens to Colet—him who founded St Paul's School

—and wondering "did nature ever frame a disposition more gentle, more sweet, more happy," than that of his host!

From this home, More was taken to a prison, by his good King. He had refused, by countenancing Henry's divorce, to debase himself and his great office, and had stepped down from it on May 16, 1533, with even greater joy than he had stepped up to it on Wolsey's disgrace, four years previously. So he retired to this Chelsea mansion with but one hundred pounds a year income left to him; after so many years of high and of lucrative office. Here he bothered no more about public concerns, but busied himself with the welfare of his household, preparing his family and himself for the end which he saw coming. It came soon enough; and when he refused to violate his conscience by acknowledging Henry's supremacy over that of the Pope as the head of the Church, and by taking the oath of succession (under which Anne Boleyn's children were to be acknowledged the lawful heirs to the crown), he was carried down the river to the Tower; and there imprisoned for a whole year, in the very cell, it is said,

wherein he had sat as grand inquisitor, aforetime racking heretics. "Very nigh Heaven," he said it was, looking up contentedly from this narrow tenement. At nine o'clock of the morning of July 16, 1535, he was led to the block on Tower Hill and there beheaded. You may walk there and look on the place to-day : but lately found and fixed on, railed in and paved. His courage and his constancy had never once failed him, save as he was being brought back to his cell after his trial in Westminster Hall ; when his favourite daughter, Margaret Roper, waiting among the crowd on Tower Wharf—learning his sentence by the token of the blade of the headsman's axe turned towards him—broke through the guards, and clung to his neck, kissing him and sobbing, "Oh, my father!" with no other words uttered. Then for a moment the father in him was unmanned, as he moaned, "My Meg!" and kissed her for the last time. On the morning of his execution he was cheerful and even jocular : "I pray you, master Lieutenant," said he at the scaffold-steps, "see me safe up, and for my coming down I can shift for myself." He put aside his beard

out of the axe's reach—"for *it* has never committed treason"—and so laid his reverend head on the block; too noble a head to drop in so worthless a cause.

"A dauntless soul erect, who smiled at death," is Thomson's fitting phrase. And Erasmus wrote: "All lament his death as the loss of their own father or brother. I myself have seen tears come from those men who never saw More. . . . How many souls hath that axe wounded which cut off More's head!"

Where they buried his body has always been matter of conjecture. In a record, printed in 1726, his great-grandson says: "His trunke was interred in Chelsey Church, near the middle of the south wall;" but other records tell us that it was inhumed beneath the Tower Chapel; and it seems certain that no one will ever really know the truth about this. We do know, however, that his head was exposed on a spike above London Bridge, "where as traytors' heads are sett upon poles; having remained some moneths there, being to be cast into the Thames, because roome should be made for diverse others, who in plentiful sorte suffered

martyrdome for the same supremacie." It was taken away by Margaret Roper, by bribery or stealth ; "least —as she stoutly affirmed before the Councell, being called before them for the same matter—it should be foode for fishes ; which she buried where she thought fittest." This spot was found—in 1835, after just three centuries of doubt—to be in the vault of the Roper family in St. Dunstan's Church, Canterbury : and there his head remains to-day "in a leaden box something in the shape of a bee-hive, open in the front, and with an iron grating before it."

In my visits to Canterbury, as I stroll down its delightful old street to St. Dunstan's, I pause always in front of the ancient carved stone gateway—all that is left of the Roper mansion—fancying I see that devoted daughter hurrying home, secretly and by night, carrying her beloved burden in a silver casket : carrying it all the way in her own hands, fearful of entrusting it to those of any other. Most lovable as well as most learned among women—"her humility equal to her learning," "no woman, that could speak so well, did speak so little," says old Fuller in his "Worthies"—

Margaret Roper holds her high place among the Fair Women of England, and her story is very near the first in the Legend of Good Women.

> "Morn broadened on the borders of the dark,
> Ere I saw her, who clasped in the last trance
> Her murder'd father's head."

And, amid all the thronging shadows which people Chelsea's shore, there walks no more vivid personality than his, as it moves before us through all his characteristic career; from the day he was taken from his school in Threadneedle Street, and made page-boy to Cardinal Morten, who said of him, seeing already his promise of wit and of worth: "This child here, waiting at table, whosoever shall live to see it, will prove a marvellous man;" then to Oxford on his scanty allowance; thence to New Inn and to Lincoln's Inn, studying law by his father's desire, albeit longing himself for the pulpit; then law-reader of Furnivall's Inn, whence he was called to the bar at the age of twenty-one, and so going to live "religiously yet without vow" in the Charter-House; lecturing in St. Law-

rence, Old Jewry, on Augustine's "City of God," listened to by "all the chief learned of London"; patiently practising his profession, taking "no fee of Widow, Orphane, or poor person"; becoming famous, near and far, for his capacity, learning, integrity; and thus elected to the House of Commons when only twenty-three, and soon made Speaker; rapidly rising to the highest place in the realm, that of Lord High Chancellor; and then, as he passed daily to his seat on the woolsack, stopping always before his aged father, who sat, as judge of the court of the King's Bench, in William Rufus's Hall at Westminster, and "reverently kneeling down in the sight of all, ask his blessing."

In the gallery of Old Masters at Brussels, I found lately, after long searching, a diminutive dark canvas set in a black frame, with a small gilt column on each side; its tiny tablet bears the inscription: "Holbein le jeune, 1497–1543. Thomas Morus." This most attractive painting shows a table on which lies a small dog, peering at his master who sits behind; in More's right hand, one finger between the leaves, he holds a book; his left hand grips his dark gown at the neck;

a flat cap is on his head ; a short curling beard, steadfast honest eyes, a plain, resolute, shrewd, strong face : —this is the man "in his habit as he lived" in the later years of his good life.

This portrait—as well as the more famous group of More and his family, now in Nostell Priory—was painted by Hans Holbein,[1] while he was living with More. He had grown tired of his dissipated life in Basle and of his wife, and had come to England with a letter of introduction to More, from Erasmus, whose portrait Holbein had just finished in Basle ; and More was so pleased with the man that he gave him a home with himself. Here were passed three of the happiest years of the great painter's life, during which he did much good work. Some of this was shown to the king on one of his visits, More having hung several of the portraits in a fine light for that purpose ; and they so charmed the delicate-minded monarch that he asked,

[1] The painting in the National Portrait Gallery is a copy by an unknown—withal a skilful—hand, of Holbein's crayon sketch, now in Windsor Castle. Its most striking feature is More's mouth : these lips seem to speak to us at once with sweetness and with sternness.

"if such an artist were still alive, and to be had for money?" So it came to pass that Holbein, on losing his good friend, entered the king's service, and there remained until his own death.

After More's execution, and the confiscation of his property—which is a tautological way of speaking of any of Henry's murders—the house passed through many hands, noble and base, clean and dirty; and while everything is of interest concerning walls which, in Cicero's words, "could give such good reason for their fame," it would be but dry detail to follow their forlorn fortunes fully. Of the noblemen and courtiers who dwelt here, few are worthy our notice: but I may mention that as early as 1586 Lord and Lady Dacre had bought the house and estate; and here her brother, Thomas Sackville, often visited her, and from here many of his letters are dated. Here he may have written his "Gorbudic," the first English Tragedy. It was Sackville who was sent to tell Queen Mary of Scots that her sentence was signed, and he it was who saw it executed.

Lady Dacre, surviving her husband, willed the place to the great Lord Burleigh ; and so it came to his son, Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards Earl of Salisbury. He rebuilt the house and improved the place in 1619, so that even then it was "the greatest house in Chelsey." So great that, later, James I. found it just the place he wanted for his favourite "dear Steenie," first Duke of Buckingham ; giving its owner, then Craufield, Earl of Middlesex, snug lodgings in the Tower, in exchange. Charles I., as deeply infatuated with the Duke as his royal father had been, gave the estate out and out to him, in 1627 ; and his it remained until the Commonwealth seized on it.

His son, George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham—a man worthy of, and worse even than his sire—regained the property by his shifty marriage with the daughter of Fairfax, and it was confirmed to him on the Restoration ; but in 1664 it was sold, along with all the other estates of this poor and profligate scoundrel—the last and the lowest of the Villiers. He was the Zimri of Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel" :

. . . "everything by starts and nothing long ;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was Chymist, Fidler, Statesman, and Buffoon.

* * * * *

Beggar'd by fools, when still he found too late
He had his jest and they had his estate."

And Pope tells us, in his stinging verse, how "this lord of useless thousands ends" his ignoble life, deserted and despised :

"In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half hung,
The floor of plaister and the walls of dung,
On once a flock bed, but repair'd with straw,
With tape-tied curtains, never meant to draw ;
The George and Garter dangling from that bed
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red ;
Great Villiers lies ! "

It was the Earl of Bristol who bought the place from Buckingham, and it is at this time that we meet with a notice of it in Evelyn's diary under the date 15th January, 1678-9 : "Went with my Lady Sunderland to Chelsey and dined with the Countesse of Bristol in the greate house, formerly the Duke of Buckingham's, a spacious and excellent place, for the extent of ground

and situation in good aire. The house is large but ill-contrived."

In 1682 the Marquis of Worcester, afterwards Duke of Beaufort, became the owner of the mansion ; and from him it was named Beaufort House, thereafter always called so. He selected this place that he might live, says Strype, "in an air he thought much healthier, and near enough to the town for business." In 1738 Sir Hans Sloane bought the house and soon after pulled it down ; giving the famous Inigo Jones-gateway to the Earl of Burlington, who removed it to Chiswick, where it stands to-day in the gardens of the Duke of Devonshire's Chiswick House, not far from the statue of the architect. It was on meeting its disjointed stones, as they were being carted away, that Alexander Pope wrote the well-known lines :

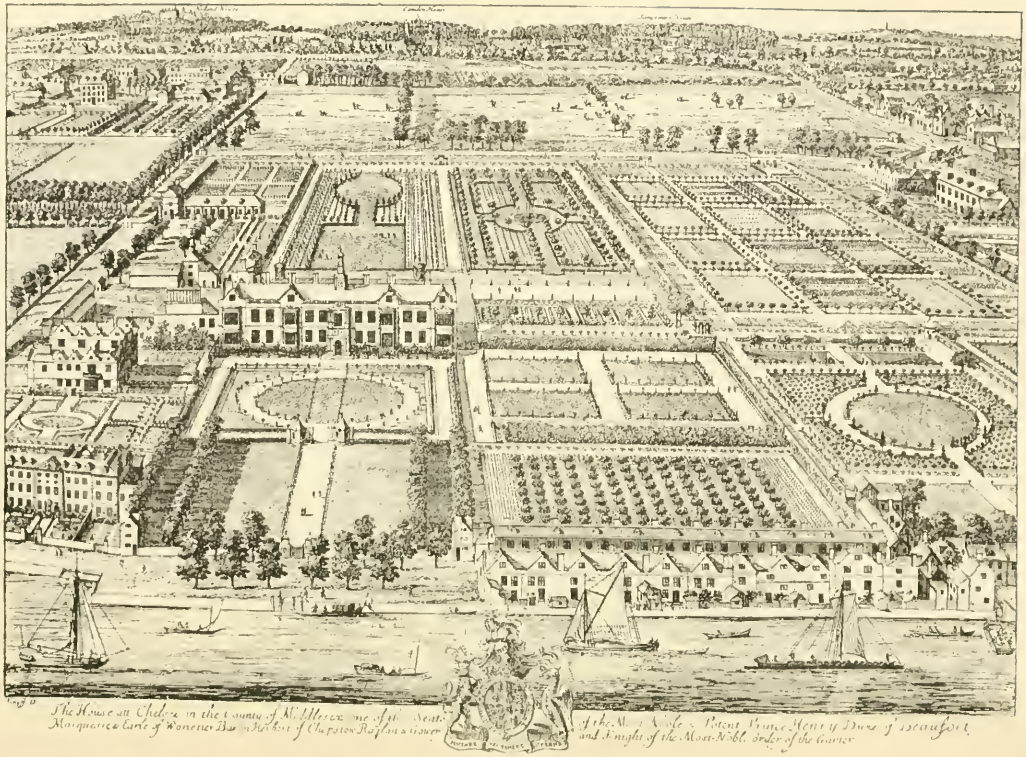
Passenger : "O Gate, how com'st thou here ?"

Gate : "I was brought from Chelsea last year,
Batter'd with wind and weather ;
Inigo Jones put me together ;
Sir Hans Sloane
Let me alone ;
Burlington brought me hither."

Do not think, however, that this gateway is the only relic of More's mansion; for the persevering prowler may find still another, well worth the search. Where King's Road curves about to Millman's Street—known on the old maps of those days as the Lovers' Walk, "A Way to Little Chelsea"—an ancient gateway gave entrance to More's back garden and stables, and through it we may now pass into the Moravian Burial Ground. Here, in the peacefullest spot in all London, lie in rows, men and women on opposite sides, our Moravian brothers and sisters, "departed," as their little head-stones, in their touching simplicity, tell us. Grass grows above them, great trees guard them; trees perhaps planted by More himself. For this was part of the "very fine gardens" which Bowack speaks of; and that massive wall at the farther end was built in the century which saw the Armada. In among the gardens of the houses beyond, may be found other bits of wall; all built of very narrow bricks, such as we trace in More's chapel in Chelsea Old Church; bricks made only then, peculiar to that period, not seen since. This largest piece we are looking at is still solid enough,

though bulging here and there with its weight of over three hundred years, its bricks black with age and smoke ; here are the traces of beams once set in it, here is a bit of an archway, there the remains of a fireplace. Thomas More's arm rested on this wall : it is part of him, and he mutely bequeaths it to our care. It is well that we should claim salvage for this bit of wreckage thrown upon the beach of Time, with his mark upon it.

The little brick cottage of the keeper of the graveyard is overrun with vines, and answers to the assurance of the antiquity of all within the enclosure. The long low building of one room formerly serving as the Moravian Chapel is now used for a Sunday School. As I glance through the windows in this Sunday sunset I see boys wriggling on board benches, struggling with big Bible names, and mad for the fresh air and the freedom outside ; one belated boy, trying at the locked gate, does not look unhappy at being refused entrance. There are memorial tablets on the chapel walls ; one of them bears the name of "Christian Renatus, Count of Zinzendorf" ; another that of



The House at Chelsea in the County of Middlesex one of the Seats of the Most Noble & Potent Prince Henry Duke of Beaufort Marquess Earle of Worcester Baron Herbert of Chepstow Raglan & Gower and Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter

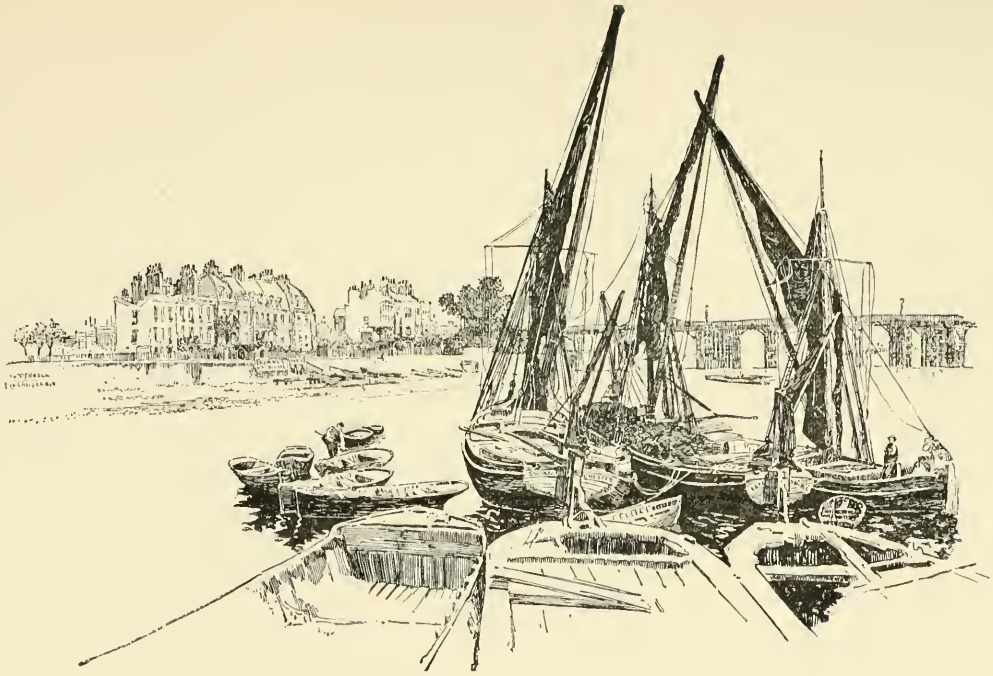
"Maria Justina, Countess Reuss." These were the son and daughter of the great Zinzendorf; and to tell how these came here I must give you the story of another great Chelsea mansion, Lindsey House.[1]

It still stands slightly slant-wise to the river road, just west of the quaint group of houses on the corner of Cheyne Walk and Beaufort Street. Its front has been stuccoed, and it has been otherwise modernized; but it has not been entirely robbed of its old-fashioned stateliness. The five separate dwellings into which it

[1] In our reproduction of this rare print in the British Museum of about the year 1682, Lindsey House is seen on the river bank at the extreme left; behind it is a building in the Dutch style, concerning which I can find no record anywhere; More's mansion stands on the slope half-way up to King's Road, in the midst of its "great extent of profitable garden and pleasure ground;" behind and to its left are the stables and out-buildings. Just beyond King's Road, on the left, may be seen the small settlement named then and known now as "Little Chelsea." In the far distance, rise, on their wooded slopes, Holland, Camden, and Kensington Houses. The gate-house of Inigo Jones shows plainly towards the front, and from it the broad walk—now Beaufort Street—leads to the river and the ferry, just at the spot where now springs Battersea Bridge.

was long ago divided have harboured some famous tenants; Martin the painter lived in that one which still inherits the old name, "Lindsey House." Here, too, lived Brunel, the great engineer; Bramah, famous for his locks, in another. It was the Earl of Lindsey, who, about 1674, built this grand new mansion on the site of a former house: between Beaufort House, you see, and the river. It remained in his family until 1750, when it was bought by Count Zinzendorf as a residence for himself and the Moravian Brethren of whom he was the head: and at the same time he bought from Sir Hans Sloane the stables of More's mansion to be used as a chapel, and his garden for a graveyard. Zinzendorf was a man of a rare nature, lifted above all that is petty and paltry in ordinary life: a spiritual knight, he had founded in his youth, at Halle, a sort of knighthood, "The Slaves of Virtue" and also the "Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed;" teaching his disciples there, teaching the Dutchmen in Holland, and the negroes in Pennsylvania,[1] later—

[1] You may see a picture of such a scene—the sermon to a group of negroes—in the old Moravian chapel in Fetter Lane. Here,



LINDSEY HOUSE AND BATTERSEA BRIDGE.

teaching and preaching all his life—the brotherhood of man, the essential unity of all forms of religion. A true Catholic, his aim in life was to unite all sects. As head and guardian of his little body of Herrnhuters, he had used his own fortune to buy 100,000 acres of land in North Carolina, from Lord Granville, in 1749; and in the following year he bought this property at Chelsea. But no part of it now belongs to the Moravians, except this burial-ground; still in use, as we have seen, having been exempted by special provision from the Act of 1855, which closed the other intramural graveyards of London, by reason of this one burying but one body in each grave, and that so deeply.

The name of Pennsylvania just mentioned comes to us again as we walk a little further west; for its famous

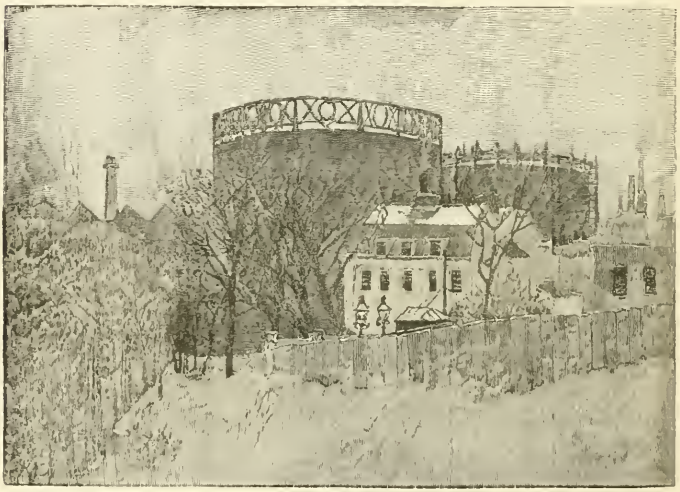
too, are many relics of interest of the man: his chair, with claw feet and curious carvings; his queer old-German Hymn-book, printed in 1566, with metal clasps and corners; and his portrait, life-size and in oil.

founder, William Penn, is oddly enough associated with the notorious Cremorne Gardens, which lay just here. The very name of this haunt of feasting and flirting by a peculiar irony was derived from the Viscount Cremorne, its former owner, "this most excellent man," known, even when plain Thomas Dawson, before his peerage, as a model of all that was steady and sedate. His second wife, the great-granddaughter of William Penn, was named Philadelphia, from the city of her birth —a good woman, whose character, her funeral sermon assures us, "it was difficult to delineate." She, becoming Lady Cremorne, and outliving her husband, inherited this charming villa and grounds, called Chelsea Farm; and left it at her death, in 1825, to her nephew, Granville Penn, "one of the Hereditary Governors and Proprietaries of the late Province of Pennsylvania." He soon sold it, and it became a den of drinking, dancing, devilry. The ancient gilded barge, "The Folly," moored on its river front, was once more the scene of just such orgies as it had known in its youth, during the roystering days of the Restoration.

Past the prim and proper brick cottages, past the inno-

cent nursery garden, which cover wicked old Cremorne: through new streets and crescents built on the site of the famous Ashburnham estate—where, in old days, stretched the great gardens of the learned Dr. Cadogan, filled with rarest medicinal plants: out beyond the high brick wall, massive with reserve and respectability, behind which hides old Stanley House—built by Sir Arthur Gorges, who was embalmed in his friend Spenser's verse as Alcyon, for his talents and his conjugal affection, and who was here visited once by Queen Elizabeth; her thrifty-minded majesty accepting, as was her wont, the customary gift of greeting, "a faire jewell," from her host:—so we come to the westernmost edge of Chelsea. Here, standing on the little bridge which carries King's Road across the deep railway cutting into Sand's End, Fulham, we look over to an old plaster-fronted house, once known as Sandford Manor House. This was one of the many residences of Mistress Eleanor Gwynne; and in it, a hundred years after her, lived Joseph Addison. It has been newly plastered, the sloping roof raised a little, and the wings long since torn down; but

it has been very slightly modernized otherwise ; and Mr. McMinn, its occupant, with rare and real reverence has preserved its antique features ; all the more marked by their contrast with the great modern



SANDFORD MANOR HOUSE, SAND'S END.

gasometers beyond. Within, its square hall retains the old wainscotting, and the staircase remains as when Charles II. rode up it on his pony, for a freak. The delightful little back garden is perhaps hardly altered since those days, except that the four walnut trees

which Charles is said to have planted in the front garden have gone to decay and have recently been uprooted. At its foot, where now the railway cuts through, once ran "the creek with barges gliding deep, beside the long grass," on the banks of which Addison went bird-nesting, in search of eggs for the young Earl of Warwick. This was when he was thinking of marrying the lad's mother, and the letters—still in existence—which he wrote from here to the little ten-year-old earl, are as genuine and charming as anything which ever came from his pen. One of them begins : "The business of this is to invite you to a concert of music, which I have found out in the neighbouring wood." I wish space allowed me to quote more of these letters. Although they are dated simply at Sand's End, none other than Sandford House has ever stood which can make entirely good the descriptions of that country retreat, "whereto Mr. Addison often retires in summer." What would one not give to have been invited out there, on such an evening as Thackeray tells us of?

"When the time came to leave, Esmond marched

homeward to his lodgings, and met Mr. Addison on the road, walking to a cottage which he had at Fulham, the moon shining on his handsome serene face. 'What cheer, brother?' says Addison, laughing: 'I thought it was a foot-pad advancing in the dark, and behold, it is an old friend. We may shake hands, Colonel, in the dark; 'tis better than fighting by daylight. Why should we quarrel because thou art a Whig and I am a Tory? Turn thy steps and walk with me to Fulham, where there is a nightingale still singing in the garden, and a cool bottle in a cave I know of. You shall drink to the Pretender, if you like. I will drink my liquor in my own way.'"

On the corner of the little turning which leads to this house there stands a tavern called "The Nell Gwynne;" this, at the extreme western end of the parish, is matched by another of the same name on its easternmost edge; and between these two public-houses we may track many other footprints of this fair lady, "with whom, for all her frailties, the English

people can never be angry," as Peter Cunningham well says. She has left her trace on Chelsea, as she left it in her time on the light-minded monarch : both shown even yet in Chelsea Hospital, according to that tradition and popular belief which credit her with its founding. To this day the old pensioners worship her as their patron saint ! It is true that Louis XIV. had probably given the notion to the English King by his foundation a few years before of the *Invalides* as a retreat for French veterans ; it is true that as early as 1666 Evelyn had sent to Pepys, as Clerk of the Admiralty, a scheme for an Infirmary for Disabled English Sailors. In his diary, January 27, 1681–82, Evelyn says : "This evening Sir Stephen Fox acquainted me again with his Majesty's resolution of proceeding in the erection of a Royal Hospital for emerited soldiers ; " and it is a matter of record that Sir Stephen Fox, first Paymaster-General of the Forces, was the potent factor in the founding. This may well be, but it is at least plausible, and certainly pleasant, to believe that this good-hearted woman, by a judicious and timely movement, brought about a sudden solution

of the question, which had been only in suspension in the King's mind. The general destitution of the discharged soldiers after the Restoration had become a scandal to the King and to the country. In olden times such men had found bread and ale and a night's rest in monastic houses; but all this had been done away with by the Dissolution. Now, the poor old fellows, who have known nothing all their lives but wars and camps, wander about, lame, hungry, helpless, in these dismal times of peace. Even when able to work, there is no work for them. Old John Hill, serving in the ranks all his life, and now turned adrift to carry the weight of eighty-two years, succeeds after long suing in being appointed to the poor post of beadsman at Gloucester, only to find that the King had just given it to another old soldier, and had forgotten it. So it was all over the kingdom. Nell Gwynne, seeing daily these warriors hobbling about, — the younger ones wounded for her lover at Dunbar and Worcester, the elder ones for her lover's father at Naseby and Marston Moor,—was touched by the sight: she had been poor herself, yet strangely enough in her

prosperity she was always prone to pity poverty. They say that one day, a shabby soldier just escaped from Tangiers — probably an impostor — begged at her carriage door ; and she drove home, and urged the King to do something for these disabled servants of the State. And they say, too, that the shifty monarch, in giving the land for the hospital, made a pretty good thing of it for himself !

There had been already a building on the ground, then nearly in ruins, the foundation walls of which may still be seen in the cellar of the chaplain's house. This was King James's aborted College for polemic divinity —"A Colledge of Divines and other Learned Men at Chelsey"—nicknamed "Controversy College," and intended to be "a spiritual garrison, with a magazine of all books." It was a failure. Nobody would subscribe, for every man was giving his money, at this time, to repair St. Paul's, and to help Sir Hugh Myddleton bring the New River into London ; and only one-eighth of the plan was ever carried out. The Royal Society used the building for a while ; in one of its out-houses Prince Rupert invented the drops, which,

in Macaulay's words, "have long amused children and puzzled philosophers"; and by which, absurdly enough, his name is still kept alive; albeit his is a memorable figure, gallant in battle, ardent in love, devoted in science. When he laid down the rapier for the retort, the broadsword for the blowpipe, he pursued chemistry even as he had pursued the flying Roundheads at Edge Hill, with equal ardour here on the quiet shore at Chelsea, far from the court and the crowd. Later, the buildings, falling to pieces, were used even in 1653, along with barges moored on the river front, as a prison for the Dutch taken in the war. Grave John Evelyn, one of the four Commissioners in control of all prisoners of war—he had rode with Rupert as a volunteer—comes to visit his charges on Ash Wednesday, 1665, and notes: "They only complained that their bread was too fine!"

This was the site fixed on for the new infirmary; and in the *Monthly Recorder* of February 17, 1682, you may read: "His Majesty went to Chelsey Colledge to lay the first stone, with several of the nobility, which is a place designed to be built and endowed by His

CHELSEA HOSPITAL, RIVER FRONT.

Majesty for the relief of Indigent Officers, and Incouragement to serve His Majesty." William and Mary finished the edifice; and it stands—an impressive monument of that union of proportion and of fitness by which Christopher Wren gave beauty to his plainest designs—in stately solidity in the midst of its thirty acres of ground. It is handsomely supported, not only by government aid, but by valuable donations. There are nearly eighty thousand out-pensioners and over five hundred inmates; these latter divided into companies, and doing mimic garrison duty in memory of their active days. Prints of their popular commanders hang all round the walls of the great hall west of the grand entrance, once a dining-room, now used for reading and smoking. In glass cases are the war medals left by veterans dying with no surviving relatives to claim them: on one we find nearly a dozen battles of the Peninsular campaigns; on another Badajos and Lucknow figure in curious conjunction; and rarest of all is one whose owner fought at Inkerman, Balaclava, and the Alma. In this hall the body of the great Duke lay in state amid the memorials of his victories, guarded

by his own veterans : successors of those other veterans exultant over the news of Waterloo, whom Wilkie had painted, years before, for the Duke himself.

Framed on the wall is a record of the battles, sieges, marches of the Coldstream Guards; which tells us that this famous body is the sole surviving representative of the force which placed Charles II. on the throne, and thus became the nucleus of the standing army of England. The corps had been formed in 1650 by General George Monk, who made drafts of picked men from the various Cromwellian regiments, and led them on that famous march on the first day of the year 1660, from Coldstream to London, which saved the monarchy and gave the guard its historic name. In the chapel, beneath Sebastian Ricci's great altar-piece, and under the tattered battle-flags, drooping faded and forlorn, you may see, on any Sunday, Hubert Herkomer's picture in real life. It is a touching scene, this entry of the veterans into their chapel, preceded by their fife and drum : still more touching, the funeral of one of their dead, as they parade painfully from the infirmary, the lone drummer and fife playing the Dead March in

Saul. In the quiet old burying-ground hard by, they lie compactly enough, the dead soldiers ; and among them, women who have fought and died in men's attire, their sex unsuspected until their death.

Not only in this burial-ground, but in the quadrangles and courts, and everywhere about, there rests an air of repose, of forgetfulness of the turbulent world without. Here, about the spacious central quadrangle, on massive wooden benches, loaf and smoke and chat the contented old boys; and growl, withal, in their content. They decorate Grinling Gibbons' bronze statue of Charles II., posing as a Roman in the centre, with oak garlands on "Oak-Apple-Day," May 29th, the anniversary of the Restoration ; on that day they wear oak branches in their caps, and eat much plum-pudding at dinner. Open towards the river, this quadrangle looks out on gracious gardens; just beyond is the great cross, set there to honour the victims of the Sepoy mutiny : "Some died in battle, some of wounds, some of disease, ALL in the devoted performance of Duty." A little farther out rises the obelisk commemorating those who fell on that dark

and doubtful day at Chillian-wallah, January 13th, 1849. As we stand here, beside a quiet Quaker cannon, these memorials to the devoted dead lift themselves directly in front; the terraced gardens slope to the river bank, their "carpet-beds" yellow with the tints of approaching autumn; the graceful towers and swaying chains of Chelsea Suspension Bridge seem floating in the air yonder; above the drooping limes and elms of the embankment the slim spars of lazy sloops slip slowly by; the gleaming river glides beneath, and away over beyond it the feathery masses of the trees of Battersea Park stand solidly against the sky. The opulent summer sun floods the scene, and an enchanting stillness broods above all, broken only by the rare rumble of trains on the farther railway-bridge. All things are half hid in the exquisite English haze: it softens every sharpness, harmonizes every harshness, rounds every shape to grace.

The Old Soldiers have their own gardens near at hand, and as we stroll there we pass College Fields,

perpetuating the name of King James's College ; and so on between double rows of lime trees, gnarled and bent, under which the amorous veterans flirt sedately with the demure nursemaids, whose neglected charges meanwhile play with the sheep. Through the gate we enter a small but well-arranged domain, divided into tiny squares ; each planted by its owner in flowers or in vegetables as may suit him, so giving him a little more tobacco money by his sales. They seem fond of those plants which put themselves most in evidence ; and their little gardens are all aglow with gorgeous hollyhocks, dahlias, sunflowers, of the most gigantic and highly coloured kinds. It is a delight to watch the old fellows of a summer afternoon, bending intent on their toil in shirt-sleeves ; or stalking stiffly about in their long red coats, senilely chaffing and cackling !

You will be pleased, I hope, to learn that this little piece of ground is called Ranelagh Gardens, and is the sole surviving remnant of that famous resort so dear to an older generation. "The R:t Hon:ble Richard Earle of Ranelagh," as he is styled on the original "Ground

Plot of the Royal Hospital" in the British Museum, being made one of the three commissioners appointed in the beginning to manage the young asylum, leases to himself seven acres of its grounds on the east, lying along the river, and there builds a grand mansion, in 1691; the gardens of which are "curiously kept and elegantly designed: so esteemed the best in England." This first Earl of Ranelagh has been one of the pupils of a certain schoolmaster named John Milton, probably at his house in Barbican in the City, so recently torn down. The Earl becomes a famous man, in a different line from his teacher, and dying in 1712, leaves Ranelagh House and its gardens to his son; who sells the place in 1733 to Lacy, Garrick's partner in the Drury Lane theatre patent; to be made by him a place of open-air amusement, after the manner of the favourite Vauxhall. But "it has totally beat Vauxhall," writes Horace Walpole. "Nobody goes anywhere else, everybody goes there. My Lord Chesterfield is so fond of it, that he says he has ordered all his letters to be directed thither." Of course, he has his sneer at the "rival mobs" of the two places; but he does not

disdain to show himself a very swell mob's man, in his famous carouse at Ranelagh, with Miss Ashe and Lady Caroline Petersham. His father, Sir Robert, was proud to parade here his lovely mistress, Miss Chudleigh; "not over clothed," as Leigh Hunt delicately puts it. The manners and morals of this place and this time have never been so pithily presented as in George Selwyn's *mot*, on hearing that one of the waiters had been convicted of robbery: "What a horrid idea he'll give of us to those fellows in Newgate!"

At this distance, however, the fêtes, frolics, fire-works and all the fashionable frivolity of the place look bright and bewildering. Nor did grave and reverend men disdain to spend their evenings at Ranelagh—"to give expansion and gay sensation to the mind," as staid old Dr. Johnson asserted! Goldsmith felt its gaiety, when he came here to forget the misery of his lodging in Green Arbour Court, where now stands the Holborn Viaduct station. Laurence Sterne, fresh to the town from his Yorkshire parsonage, finding himself in great vogue—his portrait much stared at, in Spring Gardens, one of the four sent there, selected by Sir Joshua as his

choicest works—plunged forthwith into all sorts of frivolities, and was seen in Ranelagh more often than was considered seemly. Smollett sometimes emerged from out his Chelsea solitude for a sight of this festive world; Fielding came here to study the scenes for his "Amelia"; and Addison, too, who chats about the place in his *Spectator*.[1] It is spoken of in the *Connoisseur* and the *Citizen of the World*; the poet Bloomfield introduced it, and Fanny Burney placed here a scene in her "Evelina." At this time—just one hundred years ago—she was a little past twenty-six, and was living with her father, Dr. Burney, recently made organist of the hospital chapel, next door. Ranelagh had then begun to "decline and fall off," in Silas Wegg's immortal phrase: having been open since 1742, it was finally closed at the beginning of this century, its artificial

[1] There lies on my desk, as I write, a copper token, which I lately picked up in a shabby shop of Red Lion Passage, High Holborn. It is about the size of a penny piece, and on it is stamped "RANELAGH HOUSE, 1745:" these raised letters as clearly cut as on the day when coined. It pleases me to wonder which and how many of the men I mention above may have handed in this piece at the entrance gate.

oil-moon paling before the rising radiance of gas-lighted new Cremorne.

On an old tracing of the Hospital boundaries kept in its archives, I found this inscription : "To answer the Earl of Ranelagh's house on the east side of the College, an house was builded in the Earl of Orford's garden on the west side." This was the house into which Sir Robert Walpole moved from his lodgings near by, where now Walpole Street runs ; the same lodgings in which the Earl of Sandwich had lived long before. The Edward Montague, who, as Commander of the fleet, brought Charles II. back to England, was made Earl of Sandwich for this service, and in 1663 he came to live in Chelsea, "to take the ayre." But there was a "Mrs. Betty Becke," his landlady's daughter, who seems to have been the real reason for this retirement, and at whom the moral Pepys sneers as "a slut." He writes under date of September 9, 1663 : "I am ashamed to see my lord so grossly play the fool, to the flinging off of all honour, friends, and servants, and everything and

person that is good, with his carrying her abroad, and playing on the lute under her window, and forty other poor sordid things, which I am grieved to hear." Having occasion to visit his chief here, on naval business, the Clerk of the Admiralty finds him "all alone, with one joynte of meat, mightily extolling the manner of his retirement, and the goodness of his diet;" and was so perturbed, and so loyal withal, as to dare to write him, "that her wantonness occasioned much scandal, though unjustly, to his Lordship." Nor was his Lordship offended by this frankness, but remained friendly to his Secretary.

Crossing through court and quadrangle and garden, to the western side of the Hospital, we are allowed to enter its infirmary, and to pass into ward No. 7. Here we stand in Sir Robert Walpole's dining-room, unchanged since he left it, except that the array of fine Italian pictures has gone from the walls, and that decrepid soldiers lie about on cots, coughing and drinking gruel from mugs. But for all this, perhaps by reason of all this, this room, with its heavily moulded ceiling, its stately marble mantle—in severe

white throughout—is one of the most impressive relics of by-gone grandeur in all London. The house, grand in its day, grand still in its mutilation, was built by Sir John Vanbrugh, whose architecture—florid and faulty, but with a dignity of its own, such as strikes one in his masterpiece, Blenheim, called by Thackeray "a piece of splendid barbarism"—was as heavy as his comedies were light; and served to bring on him Swift's epitaph:

> "Lie heavy on him earth, for he
> Hath laid many a heavy load on thee."

This one end—all that remains of the old red-brick mansion—has been raised a storey, but otherwise stands almost as when Walpole lived here from 1723 to 1746, and from its chambers ruled England through his subjects George I. and George II., whom he allowed to reign. It was from this room that he rushed out on the arrival of the express with the news of the death of the first George. He left his dinner-table at three p.m. on the 14th June, 1727, and took horse at once:—so riding that he "killed two horses under him,"

says his son Horace :—and was the first to reach the Prince of Wales at Richmond with the news. To Walpole House used to drive, from her palace at Kensington, the wife of this same Prince of Wales ; who, now become George II., cheered her solitude by writing to her long letters from his residence at Hanover, filled with praises of his latest lady-love. These epistles the fair-haired, blue-eyed, sweet-voiced woman would bring weeping to Walpole, in search of the comfort which he graciously gave, by assuring her that now that she was growing old she must expect this sort of thing ! A little later Walpole drove from here to Kensington, and stood beside the King at her deathbed ; Caroline commending to Walpole's protection her husband and his monarch ! Here came Bolingbroke on his return from his exile in France, to dine at the invitation of his great rival, whom he hated and envied. It was not a joyful dinner for him, and Horace Walpole tells us that "the first morsel he put into his mouth was near choking him, and he was reduced to rise from the table and leave the room for some minutes. I never heard of their meeting more." Here Swift used

to stride into dinner, studying his host for the *rôle* of Flimnap in his "Gulliver," which he was then writing. Here fat John Gay, then secretary or steward to Lady Monmouth, a little farther on in Chelsea, swaggered in his fine clothes, and being snubbed by his cynical host, put him on the stage as "Macheath" in his "Beggar's Opera." Pope used to drive over in his little trap from Twickenham, before his friend Bolingbroke's return, to entertain Sir Robert with the details of his row about Lady Mary Wortley Montague with Lord Hervey; that be-rouged fop whom he pilloried in his rage, as

"This painted child of dirt that stinks and stings."

The famous gardens, on which the gay and extravagant Lady Walpole spent her time and money, have been built over by the successive additions to the Infirmary; and we no longer can see the conservatory and grotto, without which in those days no garden was considered complete. The bit of ground left serves now for the convalescent soldiers, and the graceful tree in the centre, its branches growing horizontally out

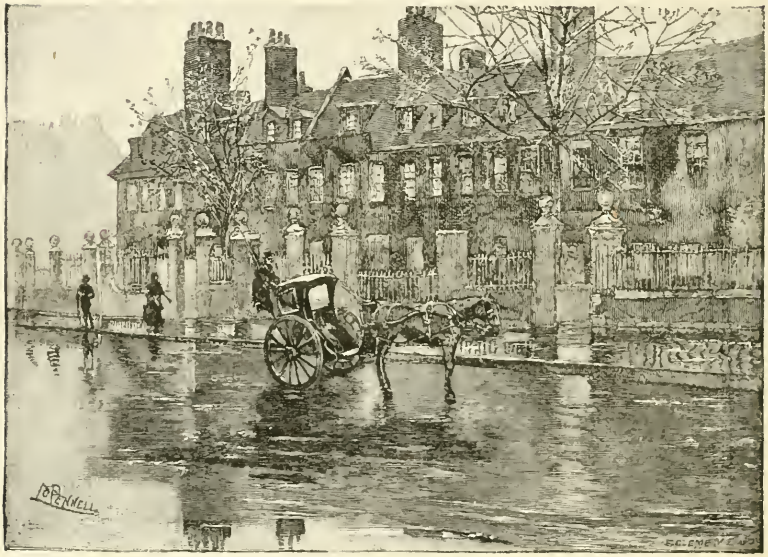
from the top of the trunk, forms a natural arbour, which they mightily enjoy upon a sunny afternoon. Down at the lower end of the garden, a bit of rotting wooden fence set above a sunken wall marks the line of the river-bank as it ran before the building of the embankment. Just here, on a pleasant terrace and in its summer-house, that royal scamp, George IV., was fond of philandering with his fair friends; this scene suggesting a curious contrast with the group once surely sitting or strolling here—a group made up of no less august personages than Charles II. and the Earl of Sandwich with the Duchess of Mazarin, followed by "her adoring old friend" St. Evremond. For that lovely and luckless lady lived just across the road, outside these grounds; and to her house in Paradise Row I wish now to take you.

All that is now left of old Paradise Row is half a dozen small brick cottages, with tiny gardens in front, and vines climbing above. Once, when all about here was country, these dwellings must have been really

delightful, and have justified the suggestion of their name, looking out as they did on pleasant parterres, terraced to the river. Unpretending as they are, they have harboured many historic personages. In Paradise Row—it is now partly Queen's Road West—lived the first Duke of St. Albans, Nell Gwynne's son, not far from the more modest mansion of his venerated grandmother, among the "neat-houses" at Millbank. Her garden sloped down to the river, and therein she fell one day, and was drowned; and they wrote a most woeful ballad "Upon that never-to-be-forgotten matron, old Madame Gwynn, who died in her own fish-pond;" and it would seem from these ribald rhymes that the lamented lady was fat and fond of brandy! This latter weakness is also the theme of Rochester's muse, in his "Panegyric upon Nelly," when he commends her scorn of cost in the funeral rites—

> "To celebrate this martyr of the ditch.
> Burnt Brandy did in flaming Brimmers flow,
> Drunk at her Fun'ral: while her well-pleased Shade
> Rejoic'd, e'en in the sober Fields below,
> At all the Drunkenness her Death had made!"

In old Paradise Row also lived the Earls of Pelham and of Sandwich, and the Duchess of Hamilton. At the corner of Robinson's Lane—now Flood Street—stood Lord Robarte's house, wherein he gave the



PARADISE ROW.

famous supper to Charles II. on the 4th of September, 1660, and was soon after made Earl of Radnor: whence the street of that name hard by. On April 19, 1665, Pepys visited him here, and "found it to

be the prettiest contrived house that ever I saw in my life." It stood there until within a few weeks, a venerable tavern known as "The Duke's Head": now gone the way of so much historic brick and mortar! Latest of all our Chelsea celebrities, Faulkner, the historian of Chelsea, lived on the corner of Paradise Row, and what was then Ormond Row, now commonplace Smith Street. A quiet, quaint old public-house, "The Chelsea Pensioner," stands where Faulkner worked with such pains, on his driest of records; yet to them we are all glad to go for many of our facts about modern Chelsea. These poor little plaster-fronted cottages, stretching from this corner to Christchurch Street, now represent the once stately Ormond Row; and the swinging sign of the "Ormond Dairy" is all we have to commemorate old Ormond House, which stood just here. In its gardens, sloping to the river bank, Walpole's later house was built, as we have seen it to-day.

Let us stop again before the little two-storied house, the easternmost of Paradise Row, standing discreetly back from the street behind a prim plot of

grass ; well-wrought-iron gates are swung on square gate-posts, a-top of each of which is an old-fashioned stone globe, of the sort seldom seen nowadays. A queer little sounding-board projects over the small door; and above the little windows we read "School of Discipline, Instituted A.D. 1825." It is the oldest school of the kind in London, was founded by Elizabeth Fry, and in it young girls, forty-two at a time, each staying two years, "are reformed for five shillings a week," and fitted for domestic service. They wear very queer aprons, their hair is plastered properly, their shoes are clumsy ; and no queerer contrast was ever imagined than that between them and the perfumed, curled, high-heeled dame, who once lived here. She is well worth looking back at, as we sit here in her low-ceilinged drawing-room, darkly panelled, as are hall and staircase by which we have passed in entering.

Hortensia Mancini, the daughter of Cardinal Mazarin's sister, had been married while very young to some Duke, who was allowed to assume the name of Mazarin on his marriage. A religious fanatic, he

soon shut her up in a convent, from which she took her flight and found her way to England in boy's costume. There, as the handsomest woman in Europe, her coming caused commotion among her rivals, all remembering the flutter she had excited in Charles II. during his exile in France. Ruvigny [1] writes: "She has entered the English court as Armida entered the camp of Godfrey." Indeed, this one soon showed that she, too, was a sorceress; and Rochester, in his famous "Farewell," acclaims her the "renowned Mazarine, first in the glorious Roll of Infamy." Living luxuriously and lavishly for a while, until by the death of her royal lover she lost her pension of £4000 yearly, she came at length to this little house as her last dwelling-place; and even here, reduced to real poverty, unable to pay her butcher or her baker, written down on the Parish books of 1695, "A Defaulter of the Parish Rates:" she yet persisted in giving grand dinners—the cost of

[1] Henri, Marquis of Ruvigny, fled from France on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, came to England, was here naturalized, and received the title of Count of Galloway.

which (so old Lysons heard) was met by each guest leaving monies under his napkin! For all that, this modest mansion was the favourite resort of famous men of her day; who lounged in of an evening to discuss and speculate, to play at her basset-tables, to listen to her music, mostly dramatic, the forerunner of Italian opera in this country. Here came Sydney Godolphin, that rare man who was "never in the way, and yet never out of the way;" here the king was frequently found; here Saint Evremond was always found! How real to us is the figure of this gallant old Frenchman, as we see him in the National Portrait Gallery: his white hair flowing below his black cap; his large forehead; his dark blue eyes; the great wen that grew in his later years between them, just at the top of his nose: a shrewd, kindly, epicurean face. He came of a noble Norman family from Denis le Guast, this Charles de Saint Denys, Seigneur de Saint Evremond. Entering the army at an early age, he rose rapidly to a captaincy; his bravery and his wit—a little less than that of Voltaire, whom he helped to form, says Hallam—making him

the friend of Turenne, of the great Condè, and of others of that brilliant band. Satirizing Mazarin, he was locked in the Bastille for three months; and when free, he finally fled from the cardinal's fury, and came to England: here to end his days, waiting on this still fascinating woman, worshipping her, advising her, writing plays for her, and poetry to her. He held the rank of Governor of Duck Island, in the ornamental water of St. James's Park — an office invented for him by Charles II., and having a fine title, a large salary, and no duties. You may throw bread to-day to the lineal descendants of those ducks of which the King was so fond. Saint Evremond died in 1703, and lies in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey, near to Chaucer and Beaumont and Dryden; his adored lady having died in 1699 in this very house. She was not buried; for after all these years of self-effacement her devoted husband again appears, has her body embalmed, and carries it with him wherever he journeys.

Mary Astell lived and died in her little house in Paradise Row; a near neighbour of, and a curious

contrast to, the Duchess of Mazarin, whom she pointed at in her writings as a warning of the doom decreed to beauty and to wit, when shackled in slavery to Man, and so dis-weaponed in the fight against fate and forgetfulness. *She* devoted herself to celibacy and "to the propagation of virtue," as Smollett slily put it. Congreve satirized her, too; Swift stained her with his sneers as "Madonella;" Addison and Steele made fun of her in their gentler way. Doubtless there was something of *la Précieuse Ridicule* to that generation in the aspect of this most learned lady, who wrote pamphlets and essays; in which, following More's lead, she urged the higher education of her sex; and preached as well as practised persistent protests against the folly of those pretty women, "who think more of their glasses than of their reflections." She inveighed much—this in our modern manner—against marriage, and woman's devotion to man; putting it with point and pith, that Woman owes a duty to Man "only by the way, just as it may be any man's duty to keep hogs; he was not made for this, but if he hires

himself out for this employment, he is bound to perform it conscientiously." One good work of hers still survives. Failing to found among her female friends a College or Community for Celibacy and Study, she induced Lady Elizabeth Hastings—her immortalized as the Aspasia of the *Tatler* by Congreve and by Steele, and to whom the latter applied his exquisite words, "to love her is a liberal education" —and other noble ladies to endow in 1729 a school for the daughters of old pensioners of the Royal Hospital; and this little child's charity was the precursor and harbinger of the present grand asylum at Hampstead, which clothes, educates, and cares for these girls.

It is but a step to the spacious, many-windowed brick building in the King's Road; on the pediment of which, in Cheltenham Terrace, we read: "The Royal Military Asylum for the Children of Soldiers of the Regular Army." It is popularly known as the "Duke of York's School," and is devoted to the

training of the orphan boys of poor soldiers. It is a pleasant sight to watch them going through their manœuvres in their gravel ground; or, off duty, playing football and leap-frog. They bear themselves right martially in their red jackets and queer caps, a few proudly carrying their corporal's yellow chevrons, a fewer still prouder of their "good conduct stripes." It was "B 65," big with the double dignity of both badges of honour, who unbent to my questioning; and explained that the lads are entered at the age of ten, can remain until fourteen, can then become drummers if fitted for that vocation, or can give up their army career and take their chances in civilians' pursuits.

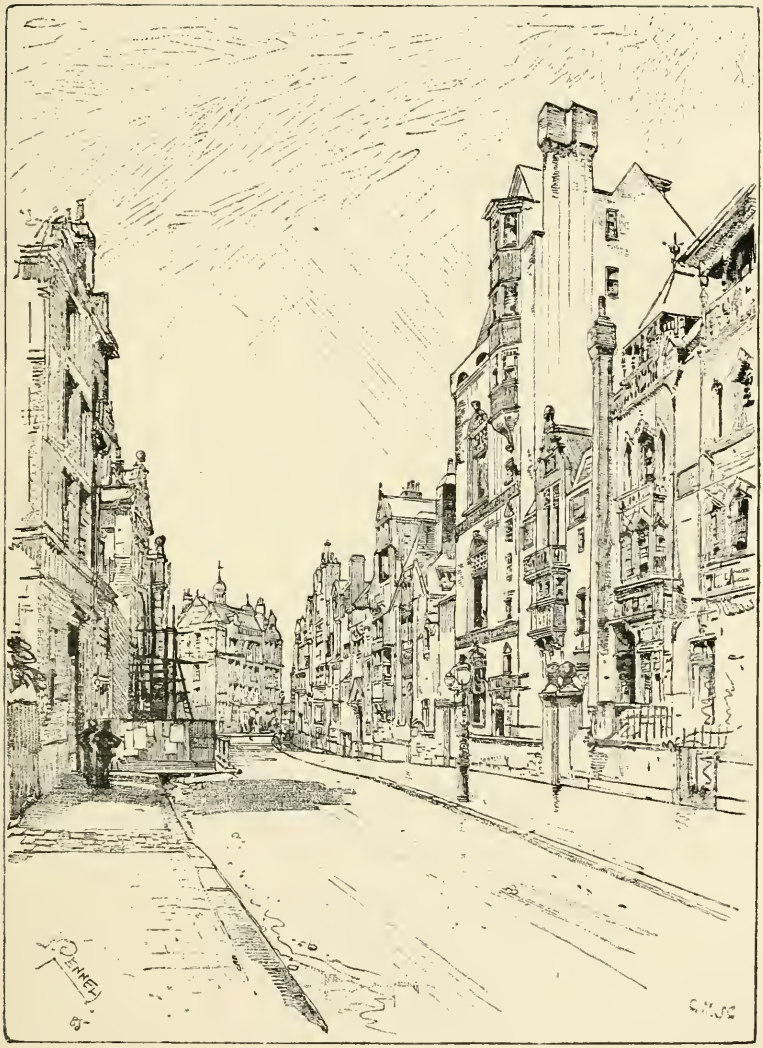
We may not pause long before the iron gates which let us look in on the mansion named Blacklands; now a private mad-house, and the only remnant of the great estate once owned by Lord Cheyne, and which covered more than the extent of Sloane Street and Square, Cadogan and Hans Place: all these laid out and built by Holland in 1777, and by him called Hans Town. We might have stopped, a while ago, in front of the vast Chelsea barracks, just to the

south, to look at the faded plaster-fronted shop, opposite. "The Old Chelsea Bun-House," its sign assured us it was, before its demolition last year; yet it was only the descendant of the original house, which stood a little farther east up Pimlico Road, formerly Jews' Road. That once mal-odorous street is yet fragrant with the buns baked there in the last century, when the little shop was crowded with dainty damsels in hoops and furbelows, with gallants in wigs and three-cornered hats, while stately flunkies strode in the street below. "Pray, are not the fine buns sold here in our town as the rare Chelsea buns? I bought one to-day in my walk"—Swift tells Stella in his journal for 1712. Half-mad George III. and Queen Charlotte — she popularly known as "Old Snuffy" — were fond of driving out to Chelsea Bun-House, to sit on its verandah munching buns, much stared at by the curious crowd. The old building was torn down in 1839, "to the general regret in London and its environs," its crazy collection of poor pictures, bogus antiques, and genuine Chelsea ware being sold by auction; all of which is duly chronicled in "The

Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction" of April 6, 1839.

Turning back again to Paradise Row, we glance across the road at a great square mansion standing in spacious grounds, used as the Victoria Hospital for Children, a beneficent institution. This is Gough House, built by that profane Earl of Carberry, who diced and drank and dallied in company with Buckingham and Rochester and Sedley. Early in the last century it came into possession of Sir John Gough, whence the name it still retains. Nearly two centuries of odd doings and of queer social history tenant these walls; but we can pause no longer than to glance at the little cots standing against the ancient wainscotting of the stately rooms, and the infant patients toddling up the massive oak staircases.

We turn the corner, and pass through Tite Street, and so come, in refreshing contrast with its ambitious artificiality, to a bit of genuine nature—a great garden stretching from Swan Walk and the Queen's Road, and fronting just here on the Embankment. On one of the great stone posts of this entrance—once the water-



TITE STREET.

gate—we read : " The Botanic Garden of the Society of Apothecaries of London. A.D. 1673 ;" on the other : " Granted to the Society in Perpetuity by Sir Hans Sloane, Bart., A.D. 1723." These grounds remain intact as when in this last-named year four acres of Lord Cheyne's former domain were made over to the Society of Apothecaries for " The Chelsea Physick Garden ;" with permission to build thereon a barge-house and offices, for their convenience when they came up the river. The buildings were demolished in 1853, but the gardens have bravely held out against the Vandal hordes of bricklayers and builders ; and in them all the herbs of Materia Medica which can grow in the open air are cultivated to this very day for the instruction of medical students, just as when Dr. Johnson's Polyphilus —the universal genius of the *Rambler*—started to come out here from London streets to see a new plant in flower. The trees are no longer so vigorous as when Evelyn, so fond of fine trees, praised them ; and of the twelve noble Cedars of Lebanon planted by the hand of Sir Hans, but one still stands ; and this one, even in its decrepitude, is nearly as notable, it seems to me, as

that glorious unequalled one in the private garden of Monseigneur the Archbishop of Tours. In the centre stands the statue of Sir Hans Sloane, put up in 1733, chipped and stained by wind and weather. For, in this garden Hans Sloane studied, and when he became rich and famous and bought the manor of Chelsea, he gave the freehold of this place to the Apothecaries' Company on condition that it should be devoted for ever to the use of all students of nature.

Westward a little way, we come to "Swan House." This modern-antique mansion stands on the site of, and gets its name from, the "Old Swan Tavern," which has been gone these fifteen years now, and which stood right over the river, with projecting wooden balconies, and a land entrance from Queen's Road. It and its predecessor—a little lower down the river—were historic public-houses resorted to by parties pleasuring from town; and this was always a house of call for watermen with their wherries, as we find so well pictured in Marryat's "Jacob Faithful." Here Pepys turned back on the 9th of April, 1666; having come out for a holiday, and "thinking to have been

STATUE OF SIR HANS SLOANE IN THE BOTANIC GARDENS.

merry at Chelsey; but being come almost to the house by coach near the waterside, a house alone, I think the Swan," he learned from a passer-by that the plague had broken out in this suburb, and that the "house was shut up of the sickness. So we with great affright . . . went away for Kensington." The old fellow—he was young then—was fond of taking boat or coach, "to be merry at Chelsey"; often with Mrs. Knipp, the pretty actress; sometimes with both her and his wife, and then he drily complains to his diary—"and my wife out of humour, as she always is when this woman is by." Yet the critics claim that he had no sense of fun! Until the "Old Swan" was torn down, it served as the goal for the annual race which is still rowed on the first day of every August from the "Old Swan Tavern" at London Bridge, by the young Thames watermen, for the prize instituted in 1715 by Doggett—that fine low comedian of Queen Anne's day: a silver medal stamped with the white horse of Hanover (in commemoration of the First George's coronation), and a waterman's orange-coloured coat full of pockets, each pocket holding a golden guinea.

Just beyond, at Flood Street, begins Cheyne Walk; still, despite almost daily despoiling, despite embankments and gas and cabs, the most old-fashioned, dignified, and impressive spot in all London. Those of its modest brick houses which remain have not been ruined by too many modern improvements; they are prim and respectable, clad in a sedate secluded sobriety, not at all of this day. Their little front gardens are unpretending and almost sad. Between them and the street are fine specimens of old wrought iron in railings and in gates, in last century brackets for lamps, in iron extinguishers for the links they used to carry. The name "Hans Sloane House" is wrought in open iron letters, in the gate of No. 17; in others, the numbers alone are thus worked in the antique pattern. "Manor House" has an attractive old plaster front; on another a shining brass plate, dimly marked "Gothic House" in well-worn letters, is just what we want to find there. In No. 4 died, on the night of the 22nd December, 1880, Mrs. John Walter Cross, more widely known as George Eliot. And in this same house lived for many years Daniel Maclise, the painter of the two

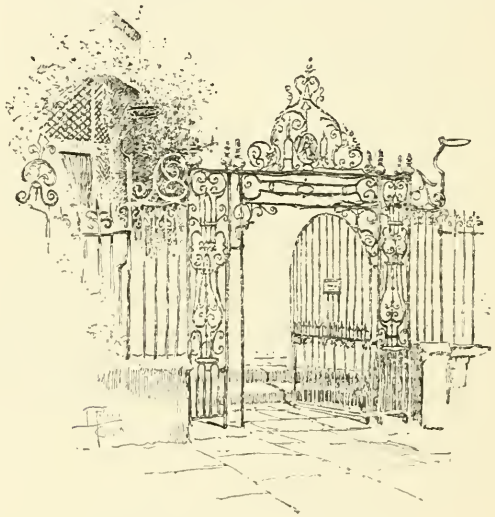
NO. 4, CHEYNE WALK.

grandest national pictures yet produced in England; "the gentlest and most modest of men," said his friend Charles Dickens. Here he died on the 25th of April, 1870, and from here he was carried to Kensal Green.

In No. 15 lived for a long time that youthful genius, Cecil Lawson; whose admirable works, rejected at one time by the Royal Academy, have been hung in places of honour, since. One would be glad to have stepped from his studio into that next door, No. 16, and to have seen Dante Gabriel Rossetti at work there.[1] His house — now again known by its ancient and proper title, "Queen's House" — stands back between court and garden, its stately double front bowed out by a spacious central bay, the famous drawing-room on the first floor taking the whole width. This great bay, as high as the house, is not so old, however; and must be an addition of more recent years; for the house itself plainly dates from the days of the

[1] In the embankment garden, just in front, has lately been placed a memorial to the poet and painter: his bust in bronze modelled by Ford Madox Brown, the painter, surmounting a graceful drinking fountain designed by John P. Seddon, the architect; both life-long friends of Rossetti.

Stuarts. Indeed, it shows the influence, if not the very hand, of the admirable Wren; not only in the external architecture, but in the perfect proportion to all its parts of the panelling, the windows, the doorways within. All the hall-ways and the rooms, even to



GATEWAY OF ROSSETTI'S OLD HOUSE.

the kitchen, are heavily wainscotted; and there mounts, up through the whole height of the interior, a spiral staircase, its balustrade of finest hand-wrought iron. So, too, are the railings and the gateway of the

front courtyard, as you see them in our sketch; and, while much of their dainty detail has been gnawed away by the tooth of time, they still show the skill, the patience, and the conscience of the workers of that earlier day. The iron crown which once topped this gate has long since been taken away; but we may still trace in twisted iron the initials "C. R.," and we may still see these same initials in larger iron lettering within the pattern of the back-garden railings. Catherine of Braganza, Queen of England, is the name they are believed to commemorate; and legend says that this house was once tenanted by, and perhaps built for, that long-suffering consort of Charles II. I like to fancy her within these walls—the brilliant brunette stepping down from Lely's canvas at Hampton Court or at Versailles; whose superb black eyes were celebrated by the court poet, Edmund Waller, in an ode on her birthday, and were characterized by sedate John Evelyn as "languishing and excellent"; and who was pronounced to be "mighty pretty" by that erudite and studious critic of female beauty, Samuel Pepys. She wears the black velvet

costume so becoming to her, and divides her days between pious rites and frisky dances—devoted equally to both! A narrow, bigoted, good woman, this: yet, withal, simple, confiding, affectionate, modest, patient under neglect from her husband, and under insult from his mistresses; deserving a little longer devotion than the six weeks Charles vouchsafed to her after their marriage, never deserving the lampoons with which Andrew Marvel befouled her.

When this front courtyard of "Queen's House" happened to be dug up, not long ago, three sorts of bricks were unearthed: those of modern make, those of the Stuart time, those of the Tudor type. These latter were the same narrow flat ones spoken of as being found in More's chapel and wall; and were evidently the wreckage of the water-gate once standing here, giving entrance, together with the water stairway, from the river — running close alongside then—to the palace of Henry VIII. And in the foundations of "Queen's House" are to be seen remains of that Tudor stone-work; while, in the cellars of the adjacent houses are heavy nail-studded doors

and windows, and similar survivals of that old Palace. It was built just here by the King, who had learned to like Chelsea, in his visits to More. He had bartered land elsewhere—presumably stolen by him—for the old Manor House standing farther west, near the Church, which belonged to the Lawrence family. That not suiting him, he built this new Manor House —a little back from the river bank, and a little east of where Oakley Street now runs—its gardens reaching nearly to the present Flood Street, Manor Street having been cut through their midst. It was of brick, its front and its gateway much like that of St. James's Palace, as it looks up St. James's Street; that built just before this, by Wolsey, and "conveyed" to himself by the King. An old document describes the Manor House, as the "said capital messuage, containing on the first floor, 3 cellars, 3 halls, 3 kitchens, 3 parlours, 9 other rooms and larders; on the second floor, 3 drawing rooms and 17 chambers, and above, Summer-rooms, closets and garrets; 1 stable and 1 coach-house." That seems not so very grand in the eyes of our modern magnificence.

I have been able to trace the great grounds of the palace, covered in part with streets and houses as they now are, and in part forming the rear gardens of this end of Cheyne Walk. And in these gardens are still

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI'S GARDEN.

standing here and there remnants of the ancient encircling walls. The fine garden of Queen's House was originally a portion of the palace grounds, and stood intact even to Rossetti's time ; something of its

extent then being shown in our sketch. The noble lime trees still stand there, and among them two strange exotic trees, their leaves unknown to the local gardeners. This garden is now partly built on by new mansions, partly usurped by their gardens. In two of the latter—spreading out into both—stands the mulberry tree planted by the hand of the Princess Elizabeth, still sturdy in its hale old age. At the back of other houses a little farther west, notably in the garden of Mr. Druse, stand some very ancient trees ; and I saw there, not very long ago—but gone, for ever now—a bit of crumbling wall, and an arch, within which were the old hinges whereon a gate was once hung. That gate gave entrance from the land side, by a path leading across the fields from the King's Road, to the palace grounds ; and through it, Seymour slipped on his secret visits to Katherine Parr, as we know by a letter of hers : "I pray you let me have knowledge over night, at what hour ye will come, that your portress may wait at the gate to the fields for you." And she and Seymour had their historic romps under these very trees with the

Princess Elizabeth, then a girl of thirteen. Within doors, too, there were strange pranks "betwixt the Lord Admiral, and the Lady Elizabeth's Grace," as was later confessed by Katherine Aschyly, her maid. When the young lady learned that Miss Aschyly and Her Cofferer were under examination in the Tower, says the old chronicler, "She was marvelous abashede, and ded weype very tenderly a long Time, demandyng of my Lady Browne wether they had confessed anything!" Katherine Parr did not enjoy these frolics, and sometimes was furious with jealousy on finding them out; but for all that, she patiently returned to her persistent pious writing, too kindly a nature to harbour malice or suspicion.

Elizabeth had come to live in the Manor House, at the age of four, that she might grow up in that healthful air: her father placing, with his customary delicacy, the daughter of Anne Boleyn under the care and tuition and example of his latest wife, the staid and studious Katherine Parr. To this latter, the King had given, on their marriage, the Manor House as her jointure; and there she lived in great state,

after Henry's death. Already before their marriage, even then a wistful widow, she had been bewitched by Seymour; and had meant to marry him, but for being forced to submit to the King's will to make her his queen. Once queen, she seemed to subdue her passion for Seymour; says the naïve ancient chronicler, "it does not appear that any interruption to connubial comforts arose out of that particular source." The estimable monarch rotted to death at the end of January, 1546–7, and the month of May was made merry to his widow—but thirty-five years old—by her secret marriage with Seymour. He was a turbulent, unscrupulous, handsome rascal, a greedy gambler, an insane intriguer; brother of the Protector Somerset, maternal uncle of King Edward VII., brother-in-law of the King; and he had tried to marry the Princess Elizabeth, then a girl of thirteen or fourteen, even while coquetting with the Queen-Dowager Katherine Parr. The girl with her Boleyn blood doubtless delighted in the mystery of the secret visits, which she knew of, and in the secret marriage later, which she surely suspected. The Queen-Dowager

must have found it a trying and turbulent task to train her, and had more comfort in her other pupil, little Lady Jane Grey ; who came here often for a visit, and for sympathy in the studies in which she was already a prodigy, even then at the age of eleven. She is a pure and perfect picture, this lovely and gentle girl, amid all these cruel and crafty creatures ; but we cannot follow her farther in the touching tragedy, in which she played the innocent usurper, the blameless martyr. Nor can we say more of Katherine Parr—probably poisoned by her husband—nor of his death on the block, nor of the rascally and wretched record of the future owners of this Manor House ; but let us come directly down to the year 1712, when it was sold by Lord William Cheyne, lord of the manor, widely known as "Lady Jane's husband," to Sir Hans Sloane. It was looked on then as a grand place, and Evelyn, visiting Lord Cheyne and Lady Jane, notes in his diary that the gardens are fine, the fountains "very surprising and extraordinary." These had been designed by Winstanley, him who built Eddystone Lighthouse, and who perished therein.

Hans Sloane had come up to London, a young Irish student of medicine; and, frequenting the Botanical Gardens in Chelsea, just in view of this Manor House, he must often have looked at and perhaps longed to live in the roomy old mansion. After his return from Jamaica, he pursued his studies with such success that he was made President of the Royal Society on the death of Sir Isaac Newton, in 1727. He became a famous physician, was doctor to the Queens Anne and Caroline, as well as to George I., who made him a baronet in 1716; the first physician so ennobled in England. As he grew in wealth he bought much property in Chelsea, first this Manor House—wherein he lived for fourteen years, and wherein he died—then More's house, then land in other quarters of this suburb. His name is perpetuated in Sloane Square and in Hans Place, and his property now forms the estate of the Earl of Cadogan, whose ancestor, the famous General Cadogan, a Colonel of the Horse Guards in Marlborough's

wars, married Elizabeth, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Hans Sloane ; so that the present Earl of Cadogan is "Lord of the Manor and Viscount Chelsey."

But greater than his riches, better than all his other services, is the fact that Sir Hans Sloane was the founder of the British Museum. The extraordinary collection in Natural History, of books and of manuscripts, with which his house in Bloomsbury was filled, and which then overflowed into his Chelsea house, was left by him to the Nation, on the payment to his estate of only £20,000 ; it having cost him not less than £50,000. Parliament passed the appropriation, the purchase was perfected, and this little pond has now grown into the great ocean of the British Museum ; on the shores of which, we who come to scoop up our small spoonfuls of knowledge are cared for so courteously by its guardians.

There was an Irish servant of Sir Hans Sloane, one Salter, who established himself in 1695 as a barber in a little house in Cheyne Walk which stood on the site of

the present Nos. 17 and 18 : "six doors beyond Manor Street," contemporary papers say, and I have no doubt this is the correct site. Salter was a thin little man, with a hungry look as of one fond of philosophy or of fretting; and Vice-Admiral Munden, just home from years of service on the Spanish coast, dubbed him, in a freak, Don Saltero, a title he carried to his death. He took in all the papers, and had musical instruments lying about—he himself twanged Don-like the guitar—that his customers might divert themselves while awaiting their turns. His master had given him a lot of rubbish, for which his own house had no more room, as well as duplicates of curiosities of real value in the Museum in Bloomsbury. To these he added others of his own invention : the inevitable bit of the Holy Cross, the pillar to which Jesus was tied when scourged, a necklace of Job's tears ; and, as the little barber rhymed in his advertisements in 1723, just after De Foe had set the town talking with his new book—

> "Monsters of all sorts here are seen,
> Strange things in Nature as they grew so ;
> Some relics of the Sheba Queen,
> And fragments of the famed Bob Crusoe."

So that "my eye was diverted by ten thousand gim-cracks on the walls and ceiling," as Steele puts it in the *Tatler*, describing a Voyage to Chelsea. For Don Saltero's museum, barber's shop, reading-room, coffee-house had become quite the vogue, and a favourite lounge for men of quality. Old St. Evremond was probably among the first to be shaved here; Richard Cromwell used to come often and sit silently — "a little, and very neat old man, with a most placid countenance, the effect of his innocent and unambitious life." Steele and Addison and their friends were frequent visitors "to the Coffee House where the Literati sit in council." And there came here one day about 1724 or 1725, a young man of eighteen or twenty years, out for a holiday from the printing-press at which he worked in Bartholomew Close—Benjamin Franklin by name, recently arrived from the loyal Colonies of North America, and lodging in Little Britain. He had brought with him to London a purse of asbestos, which Sir Hans Sloane, hearing of, bought at a handsome price, and added to his museum. To this museum he gave the young printer an invitation, and probably told

DON SALTERO'S.

him about Don Saltero's. It was on Franklin's return from there—the party went by river, of course—that he undressed and leapt into the water, and, as he wrote in his letters, "swam from near Chelsea the whole way to Blackfriars Bridge, exhibiting during the course a variety of feats of activity and address, both upon the surface of the water, as well as under it. This sight occasioned much astonishment and pleasure to those to whom it was new."

It is a far cry from Dick Steele to Charles Lamb, yet the latter too makes mention of the "Don Saltero Tavern" in one of his letters; saying that he had had offered to him, by a fellow clerk in the India House, all the ornaments of its smoking-room, at the time of the auction-sale, when the collection was dispersed.

This was in 1807, and the place was then turned into a tavern; its original sign—"Don Saltero's, 1695," in gold letters on a green board—swinging between beams in front, until the demolition of the old house only twenty years ago.[1]

[1] This house was kept, in 1790, by a Mrs. Mary Jacob, a New England woman, and I have seen a letter from her to her brother

A little farther on, just west of Oakley Street, on the outer edge of the roadway of Cheyne Walk, stood, until within a few months, another old sign, at which I was wont to look in delight, unshamed by the mute mockery of the passing Briton, who wondered what the sentimental prowler could see to attract him in this rusty relic. It stood in front of the little public-house lately burned to the ground—"The Magpie and Stump:" two solid posts carrying a wide cross-piece, all bristling with spikes for the impalement of the climbing boy of the period; "MAGPIE AND STUMP, QUOIT GROUNDS," in dingy letters on the outer side, once plain for all rowing men to read from the river; above was an iron Magpie on an iron Stump, both decrepid with age, and a rusty old weathercock, too stiff to turn even the letter *E*—

in America, in which she says, in her old-fashioned spelling: "I keap a Coffe Hous, which I can Scarcely macke a bit of Bred for myself, but it Ennabels me to keep a home for my Sons." This letter is prized as a relic by the family, none of whom have any notion of how "Polly Cummings"—her maiden name in New England—found her way to Chelsea and to Don Saltero's!

CHEYNE WALK, WITH THE MAGPIE AND STUMP.

alone left of the four points of the compass. Between these posts might still be traced the top stone of an old water-staircase, embedded now in the new-made ground which forms the embankment garden here ; just as you might have seen, only the other day, the water-stairs of Whitehall Palace, which have now been carted away. Up this staircase Queen Elizabeth has often stepped, on her frequent visits to the rich and powerful Earl of Shrewsbury, her devoted subject and friend. For, on the river slope, just back of Cheyne Walk here, stood, until the second decade of this century, Shrewsbury House, another one of Chelsea's grand mansions. It was an irregular brick structure, much gabled, built about a quadrangle ; although but one storey in height it was sufficiently spacious, its great room being one hundred and twenty feet in length, wainscotted in finely carved oak, and its oratory painted to resemble marble. In a circular room there was concealed a trap-door, giving entrance to a winding stairway, which led to an underground passage ; believed to have opened on the river wall at low tide, and to have twisted inland to the " Black Horse "

in Chelsea, and thence to Holland House, Kensington. Local gossip claims that it was used by the Jacobites of 1745, and perhaps of 1715, too; for they made their rendezvous by the river at this tavern, and here drank to their "King over the water." In the grounds of the "Magpie and Stump" is a wooden trap-door, through which I once descended by stone steps into a paved stone passage, sufficiently wide and high for two to pass, standing erect. This bit is all that remains of the old tunnel—the river portion being used as a coal-hole, the inland end soon stopped up and lost in neighbouring cellars.

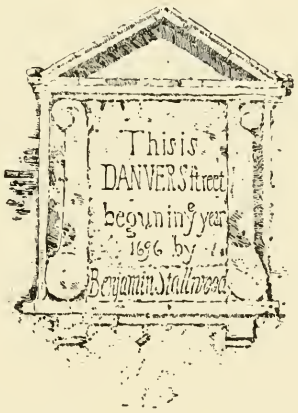
The wife of this Earl of Shrewsbury is well worth our attention for a moment, by reason of her beauty, her character, her romantic career, her many marriages. Elizabeth Hardwick of Derby became Mrs. Barley at the age of fourteen, and was a wealthy widow when only sixteen; she soon married Sir William Cavendish, ancestor of the Duke of Devonshire; to be widowed soon again, and soon to become the wife of Sir William St. Loo, Captain of Queen Elizabeth's Guard. His death left her still so lovely, witty, attractive, as to

captivate the greatest subject in the land ; and she became the Countess of Shrewsbury ; having risen regularly in riches, position, power, with each of her marriages. After the death of her fourth husband she consented to remain a widow. At her death, seventeen years later, she bequeathed this Chelsea mansion to her son William, afterward the first Duke of Devonshire ; together with the three grandest seats in England—Hardwick, Oldcoates, Chatsworth—all builded by her at successive stages of her eventful career.

Hard by here we trace the site of another notable mansion—the ancient palace of the Bishops of Winchester—which stood a little back from the river bank, just where broad Oakley Street runs up from opposite the Albert Suspension Bridge. It was only two storeys high and of humble exterior, yet it contained many grand rooms, lavishly decorated. On the wall of one of the chambers, there was found, when the building was torn down early in the century, a group of nine life-size figures, admirably done in black on the white plaster ; believed to have been drawn by Hogarth in one of his visits to his friend Bishop Hoadley, here.

A step farther westward along Cheyne Walk and we turn into Lawrence Street ; at the upper end of which, at the corner of Justice Walk, we shall find, in the cellars of "The Prince of Wales" tavern and of the adjoining houses, the remains of the ovens and baking-rooms of the famous Chelsea China factory. For it stood just here during the short forty years of its existence, having been established in 1745. Why it failed and why the factory was torn down, no one seems to know ; for its work was extremely fine, and its best ware—turned out from 1750 to 1765—was equal to that of Sèvres. Skilled foreign artizans had been brought over, and an extraordinary specimen of unskilled native workman appeared in Dr. Samuel Johnson. The old scholar conceived the idea that he could make china as admirably as he could make a dictionary ; but he never mastered the secret of mixing, and each piece of his cracked in the baking ! He used to come out here twice a week, his old housekeeper carrying his basket of food for the day ; and was made free of the whole factory, except the mixing-room. They presented him with a full service of their own

make, properly baked, however; which he gave or bequeathed to Mrs. Piozzo, and which, at the sale of her effects, was bought by Lord Holland. In "Holland House by Kensington"—to use its good old title—I have seen it, carefully preserved among the other famed *curios*.

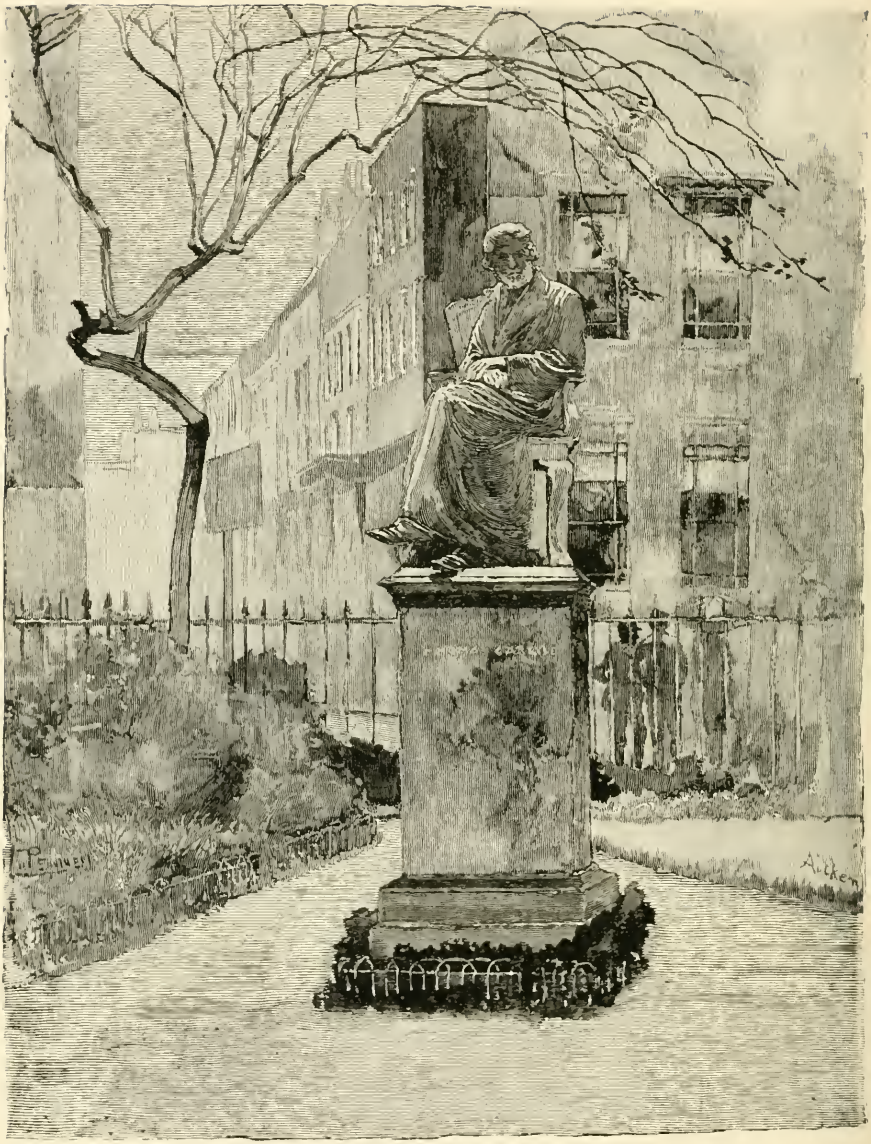


A CHELSEA CORNER.

"This is Danvers Street, begun in ye Yeare 1696," says the quaint old lettering in a corner house of Cheyne Walk; and this street marks the site of Danvers House, which had formed part of More's property—perhaps the "new buildinge"—and which had gone to his son-in-law, Roper. It came afterward to be owned

by Sir John Danvers, a gentleman-usher of Charles I., and he made a superb place of it ; of which the deep foundations and the fallen columns now lie under Paultons Square, at the upper end of the street. Sir John Danvers was the second husband of Magdalen Herbert, a woman notable for her famous family of boys : her first son was that strong and strange original, Lord Herbert of Cherbury ; her fifth son was George Herbert, of undying memory. The poet lived here for a while. Donne, the preacher, then at Oxford, used to stop at her house on his visits to London ; and when he became Vicar of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, in the Strand, near Isaac Walton's old shop in Chancery Lane, and had converted the Gentle Angler, these two certainly strolled often out here together. Donne preached Lady Danvers' funeral sermon in Old Chelsea Church in 1627 ; notable as one of his most touching discourses.

In the embankment gardens we have passed a statue recently placed there ; a man seated in a chair, uncouth



STATUE OF THOMAS CARLYLE, BY BOEHM.

of figure, with bent brow and rugged face. And in the wall of the corner house behind we stop to look at a small memorial tablet, still more recently placed ; a medallion portrait of the same face, and beneath, this inscription : "Thomas Carlyle lived at 24, Cheyne Row, 1834–81." For this is not the house in which he lived, and the tablet was fixed on this one with queer common sense, his own being in Chancery at that time ! It is to be found farther up in this little dull street running from Cheyne Walk just here ; in which there is nothing that is not commonplace, save the little cottage covered with vines, in the wall above which is a stone with odd old-fashioned lettering—"This is Gt. Cheyne Row, 1708." About the middle of the row of small dreary brick houses, the one once numbered 5, now 24, is that in which he dwelt for nearly fifty years, and wherein he wrote his commination service large on all mankind; talking more eloquently, and more loquaciously withal, in praise of silence, than any man who ever scolded all through life that he might do honour to the strong arm and the still tongue !

The look-out across the narrow street from his front windows—" mainly into trees," he wrote to Sir William Hamilton, on moving here—shows now nothing but a long, low, depressing wall, above which rises a many-windowed model dwelling-house ; and it is surely one of the least inspiring prospects in all London : while from the back he could see nothing of interest except the westernmost end of the old wall of Henry VIII.'s Manor House garden, which still stands here. It gave him a hint in his pamphlet, " Shooting Niagara ; " wherein, sneering at modern bricks and bricklayers, he says : " Bricks, burn them rightly, build them faithfully with mortar faithfully tempered, *they* will stand. . . . We have them here at the head of this garden, which are in their third or fourth century."

Long before his day, there had lived, almost on this same spot, another " Hermit of Chelsea," in the person of Dr. Tobias Smollett ; who came here to live in retirement in 1750, fresh from the fame of his " Roderick Random ; " seeking such seclusion partly on account of his daughter's health and his own, and partly for the sake of his work. Here he wrote " Ferdinand Count

CARLYLE'S HOUSE, GREAT CHEYNE ROW.

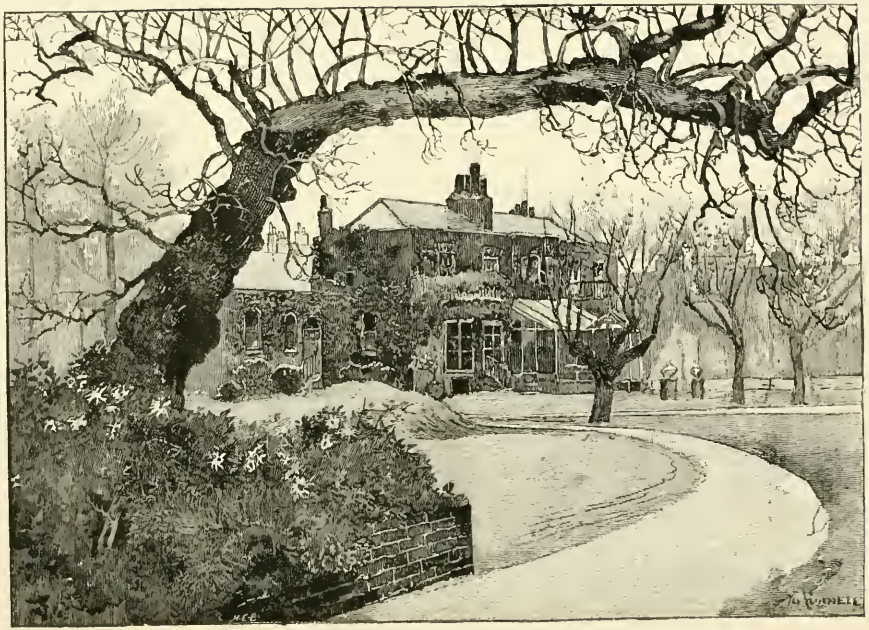
Fathom," finished Hume's "History of England," and began his translation of "Don Quixote;" and here took place those Sunday dinners, the delicious description of which, and of the guests, he has put into the mouth of young Jerry Melford, in "Humphrey Clinker." Here were spent some of his happiest days, with his work and with his friends from town; Johnson, Garrick, Sterne, John Wilkes, John Hunter: the latter probably coming from Earl's Court, Kensington, where his place—mansion, museum, and menagerie in one—stood till very lately. Smollett was as well known in the streets of Chelsea, in his day, as Carlyle in ours—"a good-sized, strongly-made man, graceful, dignified, and pleasant."

It was a fine old place, with extensive grounds, which Smollett took; being the ancient Manor House of the Lawrences, once owned by Henry VIII., as we have seen. The house stood exactly on the site of this block of two-storied brick cottages called "Little Cheyne Row," between Great Cheyne Row and Lawrence Street. Its early history has little that need detain us, until, in 1714, it came to be called Monmouth

House, from its new owner, the Duchess of Monmouth and Buccleuch ; who came here with John Gay as her domestic steward or secretary, and who here lived to the age of ninety. She had been an ornament of Charles II.'s court, a real jewel amidst all the pinchbeck and paste of his setting. She was the widow of his son, the hapless Duke of Monmouth ; "who began life with no legal right to his being, and ended it by forfeiting all similar right to his head." It is to this gracious and gentle *chatelaine* that Sir Walter Scott sings his "Lay of the Last Minstrel" :

> "For she had known adversity,
> Though born in such a high degree ;
> In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
> Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb."

Smollett left the place for ever, in 1769, and a little later, went to die in Spain ; a brave, silent, sad man, for all the fun in his books, and already broken in health by the untimely death of his daughter. The Chelsea historian, Faulkner, writing in 1829, says that Monmouth House was then "a melancholy scene of desola-



THE CHELSEA RECTORY.

tion and ruin." It was finally torn down and carted away in 1834.

The grounds of Monmouth House—now built over by a great board-school—stretched back to those of the Rectory of St. Luke's, a step to the northward. The Rectory is an irregular brick building, delightful to the eye, set in an old-fashioned lawn with great trees ; its tranquillity assured by a high brick wall. It is a very old house, was built by the Marquis of Winchester, and granted by him to the parish on May 6th, 1566, at the request of Queen Elizabeth. Glebe Place, just at hand, shows the site of the glebe land given in her time, in exchange for the older parsonage, which stood still farther west, behind Millman's Row, now Millman's Street.

The historic interest of this Chelsea Rectory, however, is dwarfed by its personal appeal to all of us, for that it was the home of three notable boys ; named, in the order of their ages, Charles, George, and Henry Kingsley. They came here in the year 1836 ; their

father, the Rev. Charles Kingsley, having received the living of St. Luke's, Chelsea, from Lord Cadogan. So their beloved west-country life was exchanged for the prim, parochial prosiness, which made such a doleful difference to them all. For these boys were born, it seems to me, with the instant love of life and movement in their blood. Charles has shown it in almost everything he wrote ; Henry gave utterance to it in his books only in a less degree, because it found vent in his years of wandering ; while George—better known as "The Doctor"—appears for a little while at spasmodic intervals at his home on Highgate Hill, then plunges into space again, and is vaguely heard of, now yachting in the South Seas, now chatting delightfully in a Colorado mining-camp. Henry, the youngest, was a sensitive, shy lad, delicate in health ; and the old dames in this neighbourhood tell of his quiet manner and modest bearing. Many of the poor old women about here have a vivid remembrance of "the boys," and speak of the whole family with respect and affection. Henry was born in 1830, studied at King's College, London, for a little over two years, 1844–6 ; his name

was entered at Worcester College, Oxford, March 6th, 1850; where he kept ten terms, leaving at Easter, 1853, without taking his degree. The Australian "gold-digging fever" was then raging, and he started for that country with two friends. There he did all sorts of things: tried mining, tried herding, became a stockman, was in the mounted police; and after about five years of these varied vocations, returned to England with no gold in his pockets. It was all in his brain; a precious possession of experience of life and of men, to be coined into the characters and the scenes which have passed current all over the globe. All his Australian stories are admirable, and "Geoffrey Hamlyn"—his first work, produced soon after his return, in 1859—is the best tale of colonial life ever written. His parents had intended that he should take holy orders, hoping perhaps that he should succeed his father in the living of old St. Luke's; but he felt himself utterly unfitted for this profession, as he also, although with less reason, believed himself unfitted for that of the journalist. This latter he tried for a while when he came back to England; and indeed, as a correspondent

he displayed dash enough, and after the surrender of Sedan, was the first man to enter within the French lines. He found at length his proper place as an essayist and a novelist. In all his works, there is to me a strange and nameless charm—a quaint humour, a genuine sentiment, an atmosphere all his own, breezy, buoyant, boyish; seeming to show a personality behind all his creations—that of their creator—a fair, frank, fresh-hearted man. He had true artistic talent in another direction, too, inherited from his grandfather; and he may have been just in judging himself capable of gaining far greater reputation as a painter than as a novelist, even. His skill in drawing was amazing, and the few water-colours and oils left to his family—and unknown outside of its members—are masterpieces. On his return from Australia, he lived for a while with his mother at "The Cottage," at Eversleigh; never caring for Chelsea after the death of his father. He was married in 1864 by Charles Kingsley and Gerald Blunt, the present Rector of Chelsea. On May 24th, 1876, "on the vigil of the Ascension," only forty-six years of age, he died at Cuckfield, Sussex,

which quiet retreat he had chosen twelve months before.

Henry Kingsley especially appeals to us, just here, for that he has given us, in "The Hillyars and Burtons," so vivid a picture of modern Chelsea—its streets and by-ways, its old houses and its venerable church, in delightful detail, as he saw them when a boy. The Hillyar family is a romantic reproduction of that ancient Chelsea family, the Lawrences; in "The Burtons" he gives us his reminiscence of the Wyatt household, living at Wargrave, Henley-on-Thames. The brave girl, Emma Burton, is a portrait of Emma Wyatt. The old home of the Burtons—"the very large house which stood by itself, as it were, fronting the buildings opposite our forge; which contained twenty-five rooms, some of them very large, and which was called by us, indifferently, Church Place, or Queen Elizabeth's Place"—*this* was the only one of the grand mansions just here in Chelsea left standing when the Kingsleys came here. "It had been in reality the palace of the young Earl of Essex; a very large three-storied house of old brick, with stone-mullioned

windows and doorways." You may see a print of it in "kind old Mr. Faulkner's" book, as he found it in 1830, dilapidated then, and let out to many tenants. Later, it sunk lower still; and finally the grand old fabric—"which had been trodden often enough by the statesmen and dandies of Queen Elizabeth's court, and most certainly by that mighty woman herself"—was demolished between 1840–42. The boy of ten or twelve then, Henry Kingsley, must have had the same feelings of wonder and regret, which he puts into the speech of Jim Burton, as he looked on this historic pile, roofless, dis-windowed, pickaxed to pieces. He is not quite correct in letting Jim Burton fix its site on the south side of Paultons Square; it stood between that square and Church Street, exactly where now stands a block of poor little one-storied houses, "Paulton Terrace, 1843," painted on its pediment; and at the back, built in with some still more wretched little dwellings, you shall still see part of the palace wall of Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, the son of the Putney blacksmith.

From this ancient site I often walk, in company with the Burton brothers, Joe and Jim, their sister Emma and Erne Hillyar behind, down old Church Lane, now Church Street, haunted by historic shades, to where, at its foot, stands "Chelsea Old Church."

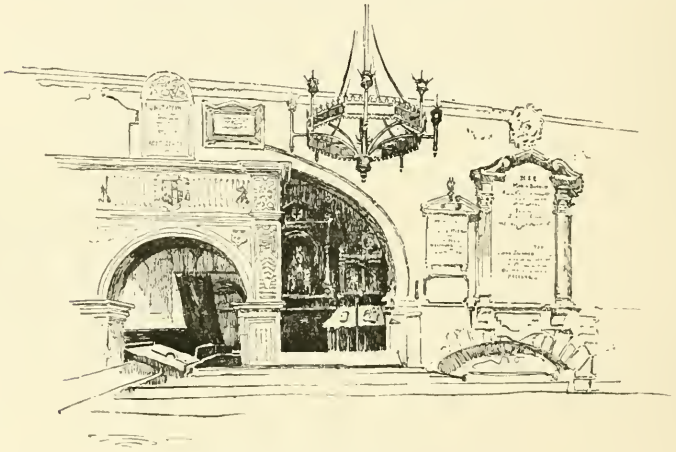
"Four hundred years of memory are crowded into that dark old church, and the great flood of change beats round the walls, and shakes the door in vain, but never enters. The dead stand thick together there, as if to make a brave resistance to the moving world outside, which jars upon their slumber. It is a church of the dead. I cannot fancy any one being married in that church—its air would chill the boldest bride that ever walked to the altar." So Joe Burton well says, sitting in his "old place"—the bench which stood in front of Sir Thomas More's monument, close to the altar-rails. But for all that, it is not a depressing but rather a delightful old church, if you sit here of a summer afternoon; the sun streaming in from the south-west, slanting on the stone effigies, and the breeze breathing in through the little door beside More's monument, shaking the grass outside, and the

noble river sparkling beyond the embankment garden. To me it has more of fascination than any church in London. Its entire absence of architectural effect in its varying styles; its retention to this day of the simplicity of the village church, even as when built; its many monuments and mural tablets, each one a page of English history; its family escutcheons; its tattered battle flags hung above; the living memories that are built in with every dead stone: all these combine to make it the quaintest, the most impressive, the most lovable of churches. Dean Stanley was fond of calling it one of the Chapters of his Abbey. This is not the place for a description of the monuments, nor for details of their inscriptions; which make us think, as they did the boy Jim Burton, that these buried here "were the best people who ever lived." Only the tenant of one plain stone coffin is modest in his simple request cut thereon: "Of your Charitie pray for the soul of Edmund Bray, Knight." As for most of the others, I quite agree with Jim, that the Latin, in which their long epitaphs are written, was the only language appropriate; the English tongue being "utterly unfit to

express the various virtues of these wonderful Chelsea people ;" among whom, it strikes me, too, that "Sir Thomas More was the most obstinately determined that posterity should hear his own account of himself." His black marble slab, set deep under a plain grey Gothic arch, is placed on the chancel wall, just where he used to stand in his "surplisse;" above it is his punning crest, a Moor's head on a shield ; and on it is cut his own long Latin inscription, sent by him to his friend Erasmus, who thought it worth printing in his collection of "Tracts and Letters" (Antwerp, 1534). Twice have the characters been recut ; and each time has care been taken, for his memory's sake, to leave blank the last word of the line, which describes him as "troublesome to thieves, murderers and *heretics*." To the sturdy old Catholic these were all equal — all criminals to be put out of the way. The irony of chance has placed, on the wall close beside his tomb, a tablet which keeps alive the name of one of the Tyndale family, a descendant of that one whose books More burnt, and whose body he would probably have liked to burn, also ! More's two wives are buried here, as well

as others of his family; but whether his body lies here, or in a Tower grave, no one knows.

Three of Chelsea's grandest ladies lie under monuments in the church. Lady Dacre, with her husband Gregory—"their dogs at their feet"—rests under a



A CORNER IN CHELSEA OLD CHURCH.

Gothic canopy, richly wrought with flowers; tomb and canopy all of superb white marble. Its sumptuousness is all the more striking in that it contrasts so strongly with the simplicity ordered by her dying injunctions, as she wrote them on December 20, 1594, when decreeing

the establishment of her almshouses—venerable cottages still standing in Tothill Street, Westminster, not far from the little street named for her. In her will she says: "And I earnestly desire that I may be buried in one tombe with my lord at Chelsey, without all earthlie pompe, but with some privat freindes, and nott to be ripped, and towling for me, but no ringing, after service ys done."

Opposite where she lies, reposes in white marble of the size of life, under a pillared arch on a black marble pedestal, another noted Chelsea dame, Lady Jane Cheyne; and on the marble her worthy husband Charles, transformed here into Carolus, records in sounding Latin the good she did in her life. Notably did she benefit this church, towards the re-building of which she gave largely.

The great Duchess of Northumberland—mother of Elizabeth's Leicester, grandmother of Sir Philip Sidney—was laid to rest under a magnificent tomb; of which there now is left, to keep alive her memory, here against the wall, only a slab beneath a noble arch, and faded gilt escutcheons beautifully wrought.

And now, glancing about at the monumental marble and brass of these soldiers, statesmen, citizens, simple and stately, we are ready to agree with straight-thinking Jim Burton: "But, on the whole, give me the Hillyars, kneeling humbly, with nothing to say for themselves." It is the Lawrence family, as I have explained, who are called "The Hillyars" by Henry Kingsley; and his preference—a memory, no doubt, of the Sunday visits of his boyhood to the rector's pew, which directly faces these tombs—refers to that quaint monument in the Lawrence chapel; where, under a little arch, supported by columns, kneel wife and husband face to face, he in his armour, his three simple-seeming sons in ruffs kneeling behind him; she in her heavy stiff dress, her six daughters on their knees behind in a dutiful row, decreasing in size to the two dead while yet babies on the cushion before her. Says Jim: "I gave them names in my own head. I loved two of them. On the female side I loved the little wee child, for whom there was very small room, and who was crowded against the pillar, kneeling on the skirts of the last of her big sisters. And I loved the big lad,

who knelt directly behind his father; between the Knight himself and the two little brothers, dressed so very like blue-coat boys, such quaint little fellows as they were."

In this Lawrence chapel we see a strange survival of a common custom of the pre-Reformation times; when a great family was wont to build and own its private chapel in the parish church; using it for worship during life, for burial in death, and deeding or bequeathing it, as they did any other real estate. When Sir Thomas Lawrence became Lord of the Manor, he partly bought, and partly built, this chapel; and now, although it forms the entire east end of the north aisle, it has not been modernized like the rest of the church, but retains its high-backed pews and other ancient peculiarities unchanged since the church was repaired in 1667; for it is still private property, belonging to the family to whom it has descended from the Lawrences, and to them goes the income derived from its pews.

Before going out through the main door we stop to look at the wooden rack to which the old books are chained, and underneath, at the little mahogany shelf,

for convenience in reading them: these bring back to us the monkish days. Here is the Bible, kept since that time when it was so costly a volume; here the Prayer-book, the Church Homilies, Foxe's Martyrology: this latter then nearly as sacred as the Scriptures. In the porch now stands the bell which hung for nearly two hundred years in the tower, given to the church by "the Honourable William Ashburnham, Esquire, Cofferer to His Majesty's Household, 1679;" so its lettering tells us.

Going, one foggy night of that winter, perhaps from that Ashburnham House of which we have seen the site, he lost his way, slipped, and fell into the river; and would have been lost, good swimmer though he was, unable to see the shore, but that he heard this church clock strike nine, and so guided, swam safely toward it. He gave to the church, just then being rebuilt with Lady Cheyne's funds, this bell, with a sum sufficient to have it rung for five minutes every night at nine. So was done for many years—the ringer receiving "a penny each night and a penny for his candle"—until about half a century ago the fund

vanished, somehow, somewhere; and this bell has never been rung since!

Outside, the tiny graveyard is crowded with slabs and monuments, many of them ugly, some curious, a few fine: from the stately stone tomb of Sir Hans Sloane and his wife—a marble urn entwisted with Æsculapian serpents, under a marble canopy—to the simple slab, worn with wind and weather, of Dr. Chamberlayne and his family; of whom the daughter, Anne, more famous than any of the others, "long declining wedlock, and aspiring above her sex and age, fought under her brother with arms and manly attire, in a fire-ship against the French, on the 30th June, 1690: a maiden heroine!" This "Casta Virago" was then but twenty-three, and did not grow in courage with her years; for she soon after consented to marry one John Spraggs, and then died! Here and there, amid unknown graves, we may find those of Magdalen Herbert; Mrs. Fletcher, wife of the Bishop of London, mother of the Fletcher of the famous firm "Beaumont and Fletcher"; Shadwell, the poet-laureate; Woodfall, the publisher of "Junius"; Sir John Fielding, the blind

magistrate of Bow Street, half-brother of the novelist.

Amid these English names is written the name of an historic Frenchman ; and his historic grave is hid somewhere in a corner of this churchyard, past finding out.[1] The church record reads : "Burial—A.D. 1740, May 18, Brigadier John Cavallier"; and this dry detail of the interment of "only an old officer, who had always behaved very bravely," is all that is told there of Jean Antoine Cavallier, the Camissard, the leader of the French Huguenots in their long, fierce fight against the cruel and lawless enforcement of Louis XIV.'s Revocation of the Edict of Nantes ; refusing to be apostatized, expatriated, or exterminated. They became the Covenanters of France, and Cavallier—a baker's apprentice, with a genuine genius for war, the soul of the strife,

[1] I quote this sentence from a letter sent to me by the Reverend R. H. Davies, Incumbent of the Old Church, Chelsea, to whom I am indebted for courtesies in this connection : "To my mind, there is no doubt that his grave is somewhere in the open part of the churchyard ; but, as the grave-stone has disappeared, it would be too great a work to excavate the whole with the hope of finding the coffin-plate."

elected their leader before he was twenty—was their Black Douglas : one even more furious and more ferocious. After fire and slaughter and pillage for two years; affronting the daylight, blazing up the night ; amazing the whole world and horrifying their enemies ; banded like bandits in the hills of Le Puy, singly like guerillas along the range of the Cevennes ; praying, prophesying, slaying :—they were in the end circled about by the Grand Monarque's soldiery under Villars, shut out from Dutch and English aid, from escape by sea, forced to capitulate. Cavallier was let go to Jersey, was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the island, and finally closed his stormy career peacefully in London. Here he lies, in an unknown grave, in this alien soil ; and the Cévenols, up in their hills, still talk of him and of his war two hundred years ago, to-day as if it were yesterday.

As we stand here, the broad embankment, with its dainty gardens, stretches between us and the river ; spanned just above by old Battersea Bridge, the only

wooden bridge left to the Thames, since that of Putney has gone. For centuries there had been a ferry just here, granted by James I. to some of his "dear relations" for £40. In 1771 this bridge was built for foot-passengers only, was enlarged later, and is soon to be pulled down; its rude and reverend timbers are already propped up here and there. Stand midway on it with me, while the ceaseless stream of men flows by, caring nothing for that at which you and I are looking.

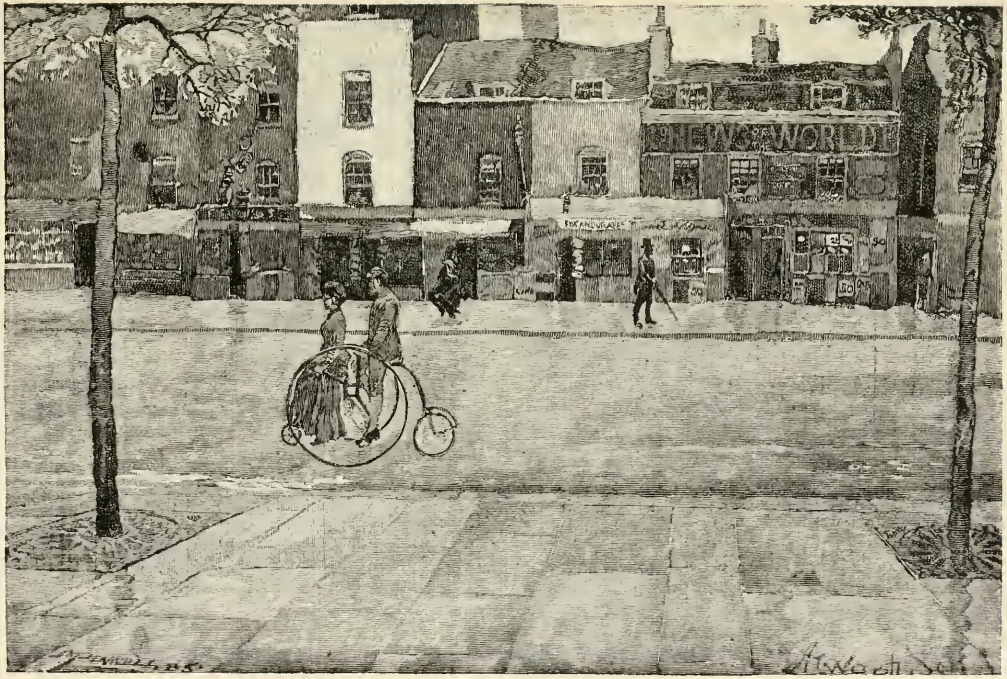
On our right, along the southern shore, stretches Battersea Park, fringed with its great masses of cool foliage; where not long ago were marshes and meadows, and the barren, bleak, Battersea Fields. In those fields was fought the famous duel in 1829, between the Duke of Wellington and Lord Winchelsea. And long before that, in the reeds along that shore was hid Colonel Blood, intending to shoot Charles II. while bathing, as was the King's custom, "in the Thames over against Chelsey; but his arm was checked by an awe of Majesty." So, at least, Blood had the impudence to narrate, when on his trial for his audacious and almost successful attempt to steal the royal regalia from the

OLD BATTERSEA CHURCH, WHERE BLAKE WAS MARRIED, SHOWING THE WINDOW FROM WHICH TURNER SKETCHED.

Tower in May, 1671. Whether the King was touched by the narrative, or whether, as has been hinted, his impecunious Majesty was implicated in the plot to rob the crown ; it is certain that he pardoned the daring adventurer, and gave him a yearly pension of £500.

Beyond the Bridge, back of us, rises the square, squat tower of St. Mary's, Battersea, builded in the worst churchwarden style ; and otherwise only notable for that therein was married Blake the madman ; that there Turner loved to sit at the vestry window and sketch ; and that there lie the remains and stand the magnificent monument of St. John Bolingbroke, and of his second wife, niece of Madame de Maintenon : both their epitaphs written by him. Not far from the church, on the river bank next to the mill, still stands one wing of the great seventy-roomed Bolingbroke House ; in which St. John was born, to which he returned from his stormy exile, there to pass his remaining days in study, and there to die. Through its many old-time chambers with the famous "sprawling Verrio's" ceiling paintings, I will lead you into the historic cedar-room, on the river front—Bolingbroke's

favourite retreat, whose four walls, panelled with cedar from floor to ceiling, are still as redolent as when Pope—Bolingbroke's guest—began in it his "Essay on Man," inspired thereto by his host; whose wit, scholarship, philosophy had, during his exile, inspired also Voltaire and made him own his master. Here in this room were wont to meet Bolingbroke and Pope, Chesterfield and Swift—that brilliant quartette who hated, plotted against, and attacked Walpole. His house — Sir Robert's—forms part of the great mass of Chelsea Hospital, dim in the distance before us; between, stretches the old Dutch front of Cheyne Walk, near at hand resolving itself into most ancient houses, with quaint windows in their sloping roofs; their red tiles and chocolate-brown bricks showing dark behind the green of the old lime-trees. The setting sun lingers lovingly on the square church tower, venerable with the mellow tints of time; and presently the moon comes up, washing out all these tints, except that of the white wall-tablets; and from out the grey mass shines the clock-face, even now striking nine, as it did for the "Hon. William," just then soused in

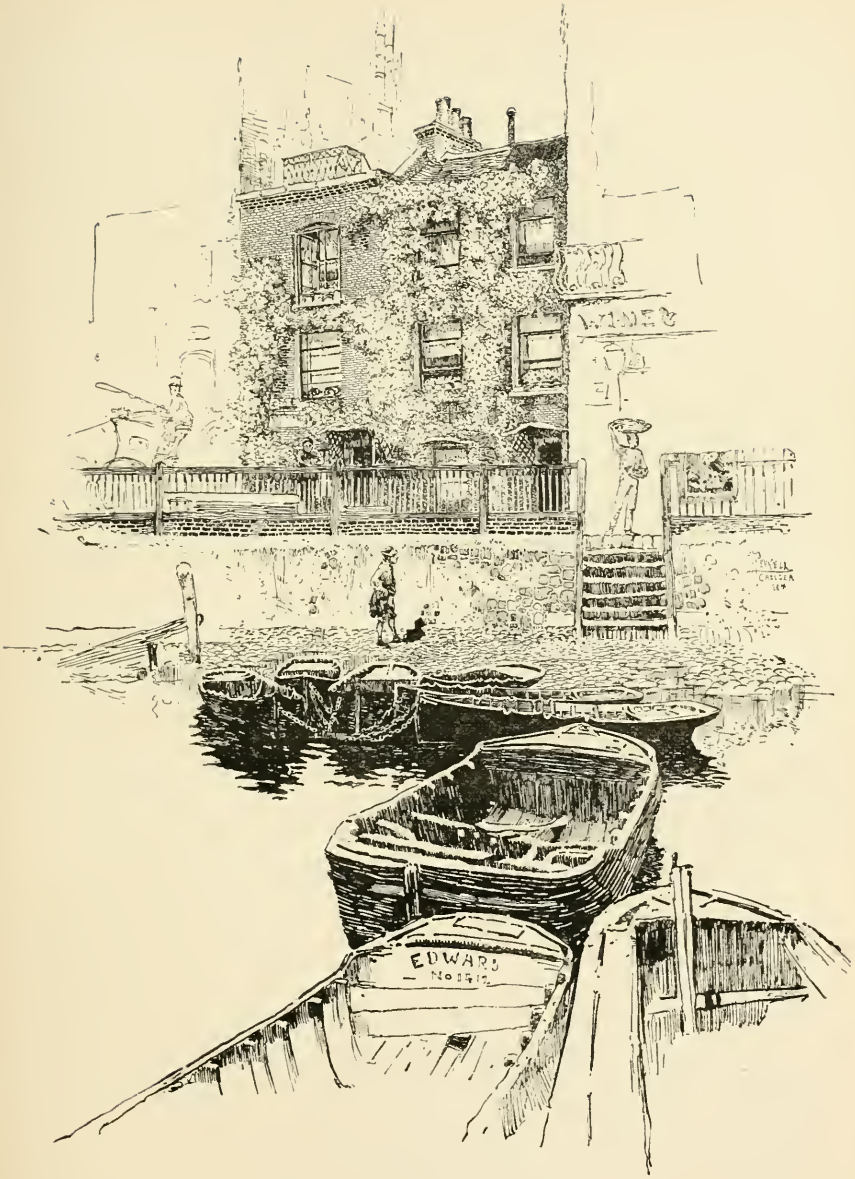


THE WESTERN END OF CHEYNE WALK.

the river, more than two hundred years ago. Farther beyond the bridge are two buildings, which also bring the old and the new close together; the "World's End Tavern," at the end of the passage of that name, famous three centuries ago as a rendezvous for improper pleasure parties, and introduced in Congreve's "Love for Love," in that connection. Just west of the sedate little "public," "The Aquatic Stores," are two tiny houses set back from the embankment; stone steps lead down to their minute front gardens; vines clamber up the front of the westernmost house to an iron balcony on its roof. That balcony was put there for his own convenience by Joseph Mallord William Turner, the painter; in that house, No. 119, Cheyne Walk, he lived for many years, and in that front room he died, on the 18th December, 1851. To that upper window, no longer able to paint, too feeble to walk, he was wheeled every morning during his last days that he might lose no light of the winter sun on his beloved Thames. In Battersea Church you may sit in the little vestry window wherein he was wont to sketch. The story of his

escape from his grand and gloomy mansion in Queen Anne Street, is well known; he never returned to it, but made his home here with the burly Mrs. Booth. After long hunting, his aged housekeeper, in company with another decrepid dame, found him in hiding, only the day before his death. The barber's son of Maiden Lane lies in the great cathedral of St. Paul's, and the evil that he did is buried with him—his eccentricity, his madness if you will—but he lives for all time, as the greatest landscape painter England has known.

The long summer afternoon is waning, and the western sky, flaming with fading fires, floods broad Chelsea Reach with waves of dusky gold. The evening mist rises slowly, as yet hiding nothing, but transforming even commonplace objects in a weird unwonted way. Those pretentious blocks of new mansions loom almost lordly now; that distant railway bridge is only a ghost of graceful glimmering arches; money-making factory chimneys and commercial wharves pretend to picturesque possibilities; clumpish barges, sprawling

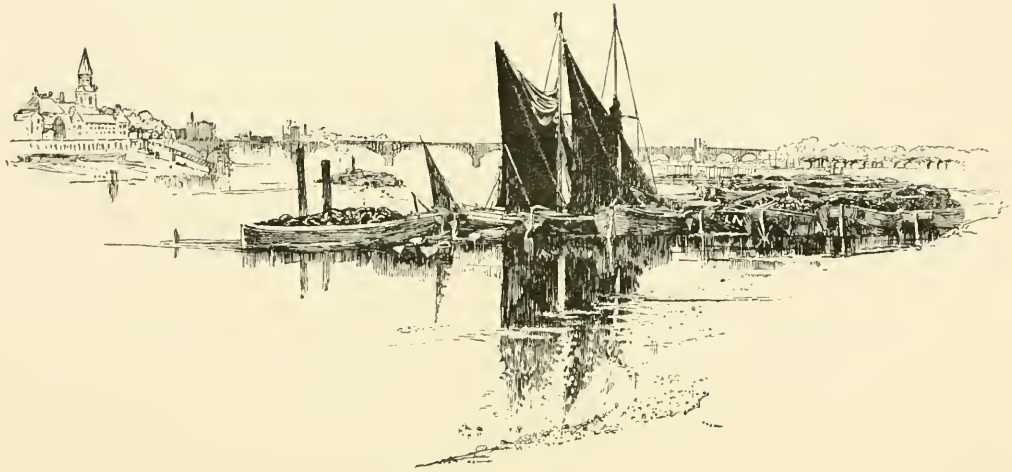


TURNER'S LAST DWELLING-PLACE.

on the mud, are no longer ugly ; and a broad-bottomed coasting schooner, unloading stone at a dock, is just what we would choose to see there. And here at the end of this bridge is a fragment of "real old Chelsea," left intact for our delectation—a cluster of drooping trees on the bank, an unaccountable boat-house, stone steps leading down to the bit of beach, whereon are skiffs drawn up, and cordage lying about, and sail-wrapped spars. Out on the placid Reach there is but little movement ; the river steamboats are anchored in a dark mass near the shore, and the last belated one edges up to its mooring beside them for the night ; a burly barge drifts slowly by under its dusky brown sails, or a "dumb-barge" floats with the tide, its crew of one man busied with his long sculls and his not-dumb blasphemy ; a puffing tug with a red light in its nose drags tortuously a long line of tarpaulin-covered canal boats. As each of these moving objects breaks the burnished waves into bits of golden gloom, the whole still surface of the stream becomes alive for us with a fairy flotilla, born of the brain, yet real enough to our vision. There float ancient barges, six and eight-

oared, gorgeous with gilding or severely simple ; those of brilliant noblemen, of the City guilds, of Royalty itself. We seem to see Henry VIII. rowing up, on a visit to More ; Elizabeth coming to call on Lord Charles Howard of Effingham, him who scattered the "Spanyard's Invinsable Navye" for her ; the first Charles, impatient to dote on his "dear Steenie." Even the commonest of these curious craft is freighted, for our fancy, with a nameless cargo, not on its bills of lading. So do we gaze across the river of Time that flows between us and the group of famous men and historic women, moving in the twilight of the past on Chelsea's shore. And we ask, with Marcus Piso, friend of the younger Cicero : "Is it by some mutual instinct, or through some delusion, that when we see the very spots where famous men have lived, we are far more touched than when we hear of the things that they have done, or read something that they have written? It is thus that I am affected at this moment."

Here walks Sir Thomas More with his wife and daughters ; here George Herbert muses "with a far



BATTERSEA BRIDGE AND CHURCH FROM TURNER'S HOUSE.

look in his immortal eyes ;" here come Donne and Isaac Walton to visit his mother, Magdalen Herbert. Swift strolls here, alone as he likes best ; he has been looking at the hay-makers, just inshore above, in the hot summer day, and is about to bathe in the river—the " more than Oriental scrupulosity " of his bodily care contrasting so keenly with his fondness for moral filth. Here come his friend Atterbury, the learned theologian, from his great garden in Church Lane ; and Dr. Arbuthnott, Queen Anne's famous physician ; and another noted doctor, Sir John Shadwell, father of the poet laureate. Locke leaves the summer-house in the Earl of Shaftesbury's garden, just above where now is St. George's Workhouse : he has just begun his great essay, while living here as tutor for the son. Pym, Charles' enemy, who lives on the waterside, stops to look at learned Sir Joseph Banks, who, after a stormy voyage around the world with Captain Cook, now tranquilly sits fishing here ; Samuel Johnson strides buoyantly by to his china-making or plods pensively back, downcast with his failure ; Hans Sloane walks arm-in-arm with his friend Sir Isaac Newton, who has

come out here from his house in Leicester Square; behind them saunter Addison and Dick Steele, and a more queerly-consorted couple, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Carlyle. St. Evremonde goes with one strangely resembling him superficially—Leigh Hunt, who lived at the present No. 10, Upper Cheyne Row; and who, "with his delicate, worn, but keenly intellectual face, his large luminous eyes, his thick shock of wiry grey hair, and little cape of faded black silk over his shoulders, looks like an old French abbé." Shelley is near them, having come a long way from his lodgings in Hans Place; where he has for a neighbour a certain Joseph Balsamo, calling himself the Count Cagliostro, living in Sloane Street. The Dandy D'Orsay cautiously threads his way, for he is in hiding from his creditors. Turner passes, gazing on his river; and Maclise, who lives here on the bank and dies here too, painting the Thames. Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his near neighbour George Eliot go by; and, last of all, Henry Kingsley with the boy Joe Burton, whom he loves, and whom we love, too.

The puffing tug shrieks, and puts to flight these

vagrant fancies of an American, sentimentalizing in Chelsea ; and so ends his stroll, his returning footsteps echoing the words of Goethe, and reminding him that, after all, "You find in Rome only what you take there."

THE END.

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